The

WOMAN WORKER *and the* TRADE UNIONS

THERESA WOLFSON

A DISCUSSION of the permanency of women as a wage-earning group, their racial, economic and cultural background, the nature of their tasks, and the official policy of the trade unions in regard to them as union members. The author analyzes the extent of their organization and their participation in union life—in strikes, at union meetings, as shop chairmen and organizers. An examination of the question of trade union organization and activities as against special protective legislation for women workers is also presented in this book

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By

THERESA WOLFSON, Ph.D.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION—THE PROBLEM

THE trade union was developed as an economic instrument of control, an instrument which could be wielded by workers in their own defence in competitive industrial society. Its effectiveness depends upon its inclusiveness, its strength, its ability to match the economic strength of the employing class.

In so far as women workers are a part of the working class of the country, the trade union should be an available instrument for them in their efforts to improve their economic status. The economic status of the majority of women workers in the United States and in most European countries is extremely low, and far below that of men. The labour movements abroad have recognised the seriousness of a large unorganised competitive group of women workers and have persistently and more or less consistently taken them into their union organisations. The labour movement in the United States is becoming increasingly conscious of the ever-growing group of women workers as possible competitors in the economic world. Much

of this recently developed consciousness is due to the fact that it is only since the World War that women have become a factor to be reckoned with in competitive industrial life.

There is only a very small proportion of working women in the trade unions of the United States. Of some eight and a half million women in industry, a very small percentage either use the union as their economic weapon or are benefited by it. Why is it that women workers who have been in industry fully as long a time as their brothers, though not in as great numbers, are not organised economically? Are they incapable of being organised? Have women inherent characteristics which make them unamenable to the discipline of the organised group?

These are only a few of the questions which have perplexed not only trade unionists, but feminists, social workers, and a vast number of socially minded individuals who are keenly aware of the problems surrounding the economic exploitation of women in industry.

The trade unionist points to the fruitless efforts of many unions in their endeavours to organise women in the industry. In the lifetime of many union leaders, industries have changed so radically that the skilled craftsman has given way to unskilled, unorganised women workers. The time, money and energy expended in organisation work have resulted in only a handful of women members in the unions. Most union leaders despair of even the possibility of organising women workers.

The feminist, eager to secure the economic equality of the sexes or the so-called "industrial equality," fights every movement for special privilege and special legislation for women workers. Her fervent belief in equality of opportunity for both sexes makes her a prey to the employer who is willing to give women workers the same jobs that men hold—only at wages which are much lower and for hours that are longer. Legislation protecting the economic and health interests of women workers has lessened such exploitation, but has not eliminated it. The feminist sees "special privileges" as a bugaboo making for industrial inequality, forgetting that the inequality existed long before the legislation was passed. On the other hand, she points to the few unions in which women are members and participate in the benefits of organisation. Her observations plus her philosophy lead her to declare that whatever industrial readjustments are made must be made by the women themselves.

Because the feminist has organised women in great suffrage campaigns, and because she sees women organised by the thousands in women's clubs, she believes in women's capacity for organisation. If women can organise as women, why cannot they organise as workers and solve their economic problems without the help of special privileges and special legislation?

The social worker, when confronted with the problem of the underpaid woman worker and her inability to make ends meet, seeks another solution. In spite of the fact that his training focuses attention upon immediate remedial action, the social worker initiates

movements for special privileges and special legislation for working women. Minimum wage, eight-hour day, special seating, and many other welfare measures have been grist for legislative mills in the last twenty-five years.

However, the passage of laws for improving the economic condition of workers has always been a Herculean task and social workers have been compelled to offer more immediate remedies.

A perusal of the history of American workers indicates that union organisation has been the most aggressive weapon workers have had in their struggles to get more of the good things of life. To consider the reasons for the slowness with which working women have taken advantage of this economic institution, one must bear in mind the whole gamut of social and economic experiences through which women have passed and the keen economic competition between the sexes today. These experiences have forced women to start their economic life with a special set of handicaps.

A Backward Glance

In every economic society a number of ideas spring up concerning women's "place" in that society. That "place" was generally to be found in the domestic realm. The occupations of men changed, became more complicated, and varied with each industrial era. The occupations of women were to be found within the limits of the home or centering around the functions of motherhood. Scientists have explained this

division of labour as resulting from the physiologic differences between men and women. Woman is the potential mother. As such, it would be inconvenient for her to be roaming over the country in search of food, or fighting neighbouring tribes because of some outraged totem.

There developed on account of this division of labour a body of thought which not only branded women's work as inferior to that of men, but also evaluated their minds, their bodies, and their spirits in similar terms. These concepts of women's inferiority, of their inability to create masterpieces of culture, of their inability to perform the same work as men, resulting in a lower economic value placed upon the work they actually performed, have been the themes of folk-tales and folk-song, as well as the theses for scientific study.

Such writers as Olive Schreiner, August Bebel, Havelock Ellis, Ellen Key, and Mr. and Mrs. Vaerting, have attempted to explain the phenomena. Whether their explanations are based upon the theory of an artificial sex inferiority developed by the domination of one group over another, or whether they are based upon the theory of inherent mental and physical differences between men and women, the fact remains that the generalisations about women have been a powerful factor in our social life. In so far as they were accepted unchallenged by either men or women, society has moulded itself around them and embodied them, amœba-like, into its social institutions, its body politic, and its scheme of values.

Modern industrialism was marked by the develop-

ment of machinery, the building of factories and the appearance of a working class made up of men, women and children. It was responsible for a new type of living, a new set of values, a new discipline, and even new conventions. The factory system, with its constant demand for labour, created cities where people lived far differently from the manner in which they lived in feudal manors or in agricultural communities. It created a supply of commodities produced by the incentive of profits, which of necessity changed the values of living. The machinery within the walls of the factories was run by steam and other power. The rhythm of production became faster, more monotonous and more persistent than in the pre-industrial era—and human beings adjusted themselves to the new tempo.

The story of working women under this system reads very much like that of their brothers. There is the same struggle with the ruthlessness of capitalism, the same daring exploits in an attempt to wrest the minimum of a good life from a profit-motivated society, and the same efforts to get out of their own class into the class above! Working women, however, have had their struggles complicated by the handicaps of the age-old ideas concerning them. The idea of "inferiority" persisted, despite the fact that women were leaving the home and entering the factory by the side of men. It was this contradiction that made it possible for working women to be used in place of mules in the coal mines of England and France, pulling carts heavily laden with coal, up and

down the grade, in a century when women's wages were not their own but belonged to their fathers or husbands.

It was this contradiction, too, that made it possible for the Declaration of Independence to declare "all men free and equal" and guarantee them the rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" in an age when American women had neither property rights nor legal rights; in an age, moreover, when pioneer women in the newly-formed United States contributed fully as much to the development of American resources as did pioneer men.

A knowledge of these contradictions, their effect upon the position of working women, the psychology of these women and their consequent economic limitations is important to an appreciation of the place of women in the modern workaday world. Such an understanding would do much toward clearing away the brush and entanglements of hang-over ideas which hamper the economic progress and weaken the self-respect of working women.

The Part Tradition Played

It has been stated that one of the earliest types of division of labour known to history is that between the sexes. In the primitive clan, women, since they differed from the men in strength, size and sex, had certain jobs. Men were the fighters, the hunters; women kept the fire, prepared the food, and reared the children. Their tasks were of a sedentary nature, lacking

the variety of experiences which are the lot of adventurers and roamers.

Recent investigations, nevertheless, reveal the fact that in primitive life, economic groups were found in which women's work was identical with that of men. "Where woman rules, she is no less superior to man in bodily capacity than man is superior to woman in this respect, where man holds sway. It is home work, in especial, that impairs bodily fitness." [1] Such findings would seem to challenge the theory of inherently feminine or masculine jobs. It creates an opposing theory, to wit: whichever sex performs the sedentary work that has to do with home-keeping, becomes of necessity the weaker sex, less active mentally and physically, and less aggressive in all things. This challenge to the authenticity of woman's "natural sphere" should be remembered!

Obviously, Adam did not sit down and say that he was going to give Eve the uninteresting, dirty, monotonous work of their menage. But since Eve assumed the work of preparing food, clothing and shelter, Adam did not exchange jobs with her. "The woman gathers food in woods and fields and brings up the little children. In addition to this, all burdensome, difficult and disagreeable work devolved upon her, and she is looked upon as a specific beast of burden and general drudge. Since these peoples (primitive) are nearest to nature, one perceives what importance may be attached to the vague expression: 'Natural callings of women.'" [2] It

[1] Mathilde and Mathias Vaerting, *The Dominant Sex,* p. 90.
[2] F. Müller-Lyer, *History of Social Development,* p. 233.

was this idea of "woman's natural calling" that wound its way down through the ages, as powerful a law, despite the economic forces which did sacrilege to it, as any "law of nature" ever was.

Coupled with the ideas of "women's work" were those of the social "inferiority" of the sex. The origin of such ideas is fairly easy to trace. One of the earliest known forms of private property was that of the ownership of women. They were the chief booty of war, they marked the affluence of the men to whom they belonged. The outcome of any form of ownership of person seems to be the birth of a slave psychology. We need not go any further back than our own period of chattel slavery with its master-slave psychology, and its creation of submissive, humble creatures, incapable of "fending" for themselves. Women were in the psychologic position of slaves in most civilisations, and undoubtedly developed attributes of cunning and self-deprecation in their efforts at self-preservation. Similarly, the work which the slave performed has always been considered inferior. Social taboos, reinforced by religious ones, were raised to keep women at their work—and to keep others from doing that work.

A code of morals was developed to support this psychology. It became "wrong" for woman to rebel, to fight, to be aggressive. To own property, to make decisions of import, to handle money, to work at the same tasks that men worked at—all of these were morally taboo. It became "right" for woman to cook, clean, develop the domestic arts as well as the agricul-

tural arts, and to accept the leadership of man in all things. "A virtuous woman seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands" (Prov. 31: 10-24).

When the early communities branched off into different types of economic development, the status of women was raised or lowered, depending upon the degree of her participation. "Among the lower agriculturists . . . where the man continues to a great extent in the low productive methods of the hunter stage, while the woman cultivates the fields, she becomes economically the stronger and attains the highest position in the whole cultural development until then.[3] In the era of domestic industrialism, where the woman worked side by side with her husband, and was recognised as contributing as much to the family income as he, her status was raised. With the introduction of machinery and the capitalist organisation of industry, she lost temporarily what little status she had acquired—temporarily, because undoubtedly new adjustments must be made and are being made. The women's movement of recent years both in Europe and America, has gained tremendous strength. Its efforts to secure political and economic equality for women not only raised their status, but also caused the traditions to shake and crumble.

How these traditions were absorbed in the folkways of barbarian culture and became the rule of thumb of each economic era is a long story. We see certain traditions applying as truly to the woman of

[3] *Ibid.*

the twentieth century as to the working woman who domesticated the cow in the days long gone by, and to the woman of the leisure class of to-day as to the beautiful Helen of Troy.

For some reason, women did not march through the ages of economic progress to the tune of the age, but rather to the faint but insistent tinklings of primitive standards.

The Influence of Environment and Race

In so far as "man makes his own history and does not make it out of the whole cloth," the part which environmental and cultural influences played in formulating the psychology of working women, are fully as important as tradition, and are, of course, dependent upon it. The close confines of the tent, hut, or home may have had as much to do with the development of the conservative fear-of-new-things characteristic of women, as the much glorified inherent characteristic of conservation which springs from the function of motherhood. Certainly in our own day women have ventured into unknown paths with a recklessness and spirit of adventure which flaunts itself in the face of all conservatism.

The monotonous routine of household and domestic work, without incentive and interest, without public approbation, may be as potent a factor in the so-called lack of creative instinct in woman, as the biological omission of some chromosome marked "creative instinct." Certainly, even if necessity is the mother of

invention, it is equally important to have inspiration and leisure in order to create. History will bear us out when we say that even women of the leisure class did not own their leisure.

The linking of the woman to her home has undoubtedly assured the perpetuation of the family, but it has at the same time created a state of introversion, an interest in her immediate surroundings and herself, which forms a real obstacle to any attempts at trade union organisation when the woman enters the industrial field.

And since women have gone into the factory, the shop and the store, has the term, "women's work," with the slight inflection of contempt, been lost from our vocabulary? Hardly. There has merely been created a new division of labour, with jobs that are unskilled, underpaid and lacking in social distinction, which are termed "women's jobs." The new industrialism has been built with the old mental sticks and stones.

A third influence upon the psychology of the working women is the cultural concepts of the race to which they belong. Geographic and climatic conditions of different countries have been responsible for different racial biases pertaining to women. These biases are the products of social and economic backgrounds; they affect the status which women have in the racial group and limit their activities, even when the very conditions responsible for the existence of these biases no longer survive.

"In general it may be said that on the lower levels

of culture, man has made a tool of her (woman) and on the higher, an ornament." [4] There may have been little difference between the Oriental's concept of woman and the Latin's, but the former did not permit his woman out of his house at any time, while the latter found it necessary to secure her help in the fields during the day and guarded her jealously the rest of the time. Both women were hedged in by the specific traditions of their race, but one was kept indoors, perhaps at work of greater drudgery, and the other was permitted to work in the fields, under the strict supervision of the conventions of her race and the customs of her environment.

In agricultural communities, the working woman, the wife of the peasant, toils as long and as hard as does her "man," yet among the southern Slavs, the woman is not permitted to sit at the same table with the men. She must make herself less noticeable than the house dog. "The dog may howl, but the wife must hold her tongue," is an old Slavic proverb.

The familiar German concept of woman's function, "Kinder, Küche und Kirche," is supplemented by work in the fields. The English have always had a higher concept of woman's position and yet among the labouring classes there is a popular proverb that "he who does not beat his wife is no man."

The Polish peasant woman, like the Slavic woman, shares all the work and hardships of her class but few of its fortunes. The Greek, on the contrary, con-

[4] W. I. Thomas, *Race Psychology,* article in "American Journal of Psychology," vol. xvii, p. 163.

siders it a disgrace for his wife or sister to work away from the home. The patriarchal Jew would have his daughters helpmates to their mothers in the management of the home. Education and training are given the sons, discipline and housework, the daughters. In Russia, however, Jewish families were compelled to change their ideas about women's work. The revolutionary movements of that country fed upon the idealism and enthusiastic activity of these same Jewish daughters who became self-supporting and economically independent.

Our own Puritan concepts of women—the things they might and might not do—varied greatly from the ideas of the South. In the South, the use of slaves for all work, made it possible for women of the leisure class to be "things of beauty," placed upon pedestals and worshipped from afar. In the North, Colonial women were compelled to share in the work of the farm as well as the home, but their status as human beings was more generally accepted than was that of their southern sisters.

These are a few of the racial concepts which have influenced the psychology of women workers here in the United States. Though the environment of industrial America is different from that of agricultural Poland or Germany, nevertheless the influence persists despite the process of dilution of races which is constantly taking place. In a discussion on racial diversities and social progress, a sociologist has aptly stated: "Racial bias is socially conditioned. Change the training early enough, purify the tradition thor-

oughly enough, and the antagonism will very largely, if not wholly, disappear." [5]

The process of eradication of old ideas is slow. The social annals of the immigrant in America teem with the stories of conflict between old-world father and new-world daughter. They are conflicts which are even more tragic than appear on the surface, for they involve the customs and traditions bulwarked by generations of experience, as against the many modern ideas of women's rights.

These are the influences which make it easier or more difficult, as the case may be, for the woman to adjust herself to our economic demands. They account for the difficulty of organising Italian women working in the needle trades. The patriarchal mandate, to be "in the house after ten o'clock at night," is a factor to cope with when the union meeting lasts until midnight. The custom arose in an agricultural community, or a primitive industrial community, where the woman earned money at sewing fine handiwork in the home under her parents' watchful eyes. In America, she goes to a factory, miles away from her home, she mingles with American girls, having greater freedom—but she is still in the shadow of the old-world discipline and standards.

These factors of tradition, environment and race concepts make up the psychology of women workers in the United States. They colour their attitude toward their jobs, their fellow workers, and their outlook upon

[5] Julius Drachsler, *Racial Diversities and Social Progress,* in Report of National Conference of Social Work, 1922, p. 101.

life in general. At the same time these very concepts are a part of the psychology of the employer and the foreman in industry. They are the ideas which are responsible for the greater economic exploitation of working women, to-day and in the past.

The following chapters will consider a number of pertinent questions growing out of this all-powerful psychology. It has been said that the best gauge of the culture of a people is the position which women occupy. If this is so, can we break down the traditions as to women's place in this economic order, and let our ideas keep pace with the economic realities? Can we redistribute the jobs of industry according to mental and physical fitness and not according to the dictates of custom? Can we utilise all available women labour power and revalue "women's work" so that it will no longer be a term of contempt? Can we, in these enlightened United States, afford to pay women wages which are even more prohibitive of the opportunities of leisure, education and a decent standard of living, than the lowest wages that are paid to men?

The customs, traditions, and rituals of the trade union are those created by working men. The tactics and methods evolved are suited to the needs of men. But industry has included women in its labour supply and has adjusted itself, more or less, to this new element, by adopting the traditional ideas concerning women. This process of adjustment can be observed from the use of forewomen in the managerial end of production, from the special attention paid to the

physical comforts of women workers, and from the extremely low wages paid.

Has the trade union adjusted itself to meet the need of women workers? Have women workers, despite their traditional handicaps, adjusted themselves to fit into the trade union? Is the trade union to be the economic instrument of working women; or in the face of the handicaps of women in industry, must some new economic weapon be devised which will not only accept women's psychology, but also women's jobs as they are? What can be gained by intensifying the element of sex between workers, in their mutual struggle to improve their own economic conditions? Can we make the trade union movement appreciate the importance of treating women members as workers, and considering their interests as identical with those of men? Can we make the organisers of the union understand the psychology and traditions which are part and parcel of the woman worker and thus cause a change in the organising tactics? Can we bridge that transition period from the point where women do one thing and are thought to be doing another, to the point where women work and have a recognised place which brings with it not only an increased pay envelope, but an assured economic position as well?

The problem of the organisability of women workers must be considered in the light of these questions.

CHAPTER II

THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN TO-DAY

To face frankly the problems of organising women workers, one must bear in mind their economic status in our industrial society. What are women workers doing, and how is their labour power being utilised? Are the jobs of women still the "motherhood" occupations of pre-industrial days? Have women usurped men's jobs, and are these jobs still considered men's jobs? How efficiently is the woman labour power of the country being utilised, and wherein is the waste? Has the thought process with reference to woman's work changed with the changing nature of her occupations?

Great crises are no respecters of traditions or conventions. They blast both away with the velocity and force of centuries of pent-up energy. It is natural, therefore, that the entrance of women into industry should be especially marked during such crises. It took an Industrial Revolution to break down the barriers of women's working sphere, and force them into the factory to work. In our own Colonial days the occupations of women outside the home were limited. The central unit of production was the home. If, by some unhappy chance, the woman had no home, if she

were an old maid or a penniless widow, she might "hire-out," but only for those tasks which were recognised as women's tasks. There were women teachers, embroiderers, jelly-makers, cooks, wax-workers, mantua-makers, but colonial society looked at them somewhat askance. For the woman "to step out as a wage-earner was to lose caste and be barred from neighbourhood functions." [1]

The first supply of female workers for the factories of New England came from this group of women who, because of the pressure of economic needs, had experimented previously with the traditions of their community. The hardships and dangers of pioneer New England were responsible for a type of patriarchism reflected in the social and economic life. The machine technique, the gradual interweaving of the factory and domestic system, and the new demands of the economic order, transferred that patriarchism to the new unit of production—the factory. The jobs at which women worked in the factories of those early days were "women's jobs"—cotton weaving, textiles, and boot-making. In the cotton industry in 1816 there were 66,000 women to be found in the factories as against 34,000 males, of whom 24,000 were boys under seventeen years of age. This marked the beginning of woman and child labour, with all the characteristic earmarks of low wages, routine jobs, monotonous work, and the peculiar psychology of "women's work." It also marked the beginning of the new-old

[1] Arthur Calhoun, *Social History of the American Family,* vol. ii, p. 80.

attitude expressed by a foreman of a factory employing female help: "We put the brains into the machines before we put the women on them!"

Machine technique created a new system with by-products which affected men and women workers alike: monotony, sameness in occupations, terrific speed and noise of machinery, exhaustive fatigue and the consequent irritation with one's fellow-workers. For the male worker, during this period of industrial reorganisation, there was the hope of "advancement." There was still the frontier as a refuge. There were the beginnings of trade unions.

For the woman worker, the boundaries were more "frozen." There were either other jobs, just like these, or there was marriage. Industry had little to do with human welfare and nothing to do with sentiment.

The second crisis in our industrial development was the Civil War. Demand for soldiers' uniforms, boots, munitions and foodstuffs was met by increased production and an increased supply of woman labour. There was a rapid change from the small shops to factories utilising new machinery. Northern workers went to war and their places were taken by women and foreign labour.[2] A Lynn editor wrote of the change in the boot and shoe industry during the Civil War: "After a time, women's nimble fingers were found inadequate to the demand, and sewing machines soon transformed the old-fashioned 'shoebinders' into a new and more expansive class of 'machine-girls,' whose capacity for labour was limited only by the capabilities of the ma-

[2] Norman Ware, *The Industrial Worker,* pp. 71-100.

chines over which they presided. Iron and steel came to the aid of wearied fingers and weakened eyes." [3]

Whereas, prior to the Civil War, the process of utilising machinery was comparatively slow, this emergency furnished the incentive necessary to increased production.

The third crisis was the recent World War. Four million men were taken away from their jobs and put on the fighting front. The demands for munitions, food, clothing, were greater than ever before in the history of the United States and had to be met. They were met by so complete and efficient a utilisation of woman-power as could scarcely be dreamed of by the cotton spinners in the first factories of Lowell. What happened to the long-cherished traditions concerning "women's work" and women's capabilities? They were overwhelmed by the growing demand for their labour. "Women's sphere" bade fair to become a thing of the past. The old line "motherhood occupations" gave way to jobs to be done by available help or "hands." Industry became quite sexless in ideology as well as in reality.

What Is Women's Work To-day?

Domestic Service. In 1910, in the field which the United States Census so prosaically calls "Domestic and personal service," but which includes all those tasks "of catering to the personal needs" (that "sublime calling" of womankind, in which there is

[3] Don Lescohier, *The Knights of St. Crispin,* p. 19.

little male competition) there were 2,531,221 women employed. In 1920 that number was reduced by 344,297. This loss is reported by the Federal Women's Bureau as not representing a net loss to the ranks of those gainfully employed. The majority of "domestic workers" turned to the factory during the war.[4]

This numerical decrease, however, leads one to speculate as to the forces responsible for the radical occupational change of the individual woman worker. It must take a tremendous impetus to break down the concepts of centuries within so short a time as the war period. The Women's Bureau in its report asks a few more interesting questions for consideration in this field: "Is the decrease in the number of servants permanent or temporary? What part does the higher esteem usually shown towards factory work, with its clearly defined hours, play in this shortage? How much of the falling off is due to the curtailment of immigration since 1914, which has meant practically the elimination of those recruits, who, in the past, took the places of girls who went into other employment? Did the war-time action of the Government in urging the American people to release for more necessary employment every servant possible, place a lasting stigma on domestic personal work as non-essential? (Had not society placed that stigma long before, in the original division of labour?) Or what is more likely, did this action of the Government tend to in-

[4] Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Bulletin No. 27, *Occupational Progress of Women,* p. 8.

troduce women who lacked initiative, to new kinds of work which they individually would never have undertaken, yet found themselves perfectly capable of doing and which was often more interesting, at higher pay, and performed under more desirable working conditions?" [5]

Agriculture. The fact remains that agriculture, an old and tried "woman's job," capitulated before the onslaughts of modern industrial demands. Agriculture is an occupation for which women have been held responsible. When the primitive male went off to hunt or fish, the female companion at home "puttered around" in the nearby fields and woods, and with infinite patience developed the culture of plants and vegetables. The farmer's wife in the United States has been an important factor in the development of farming. Not only has she cooked, scrubbed and washed in the home, but she has worked side by side with her husband in the fields. When the farming family became more prosperous, the "hired girl" became equally important in farm life. The stories of families of foreigners migrating to the West and cultivating the land with the aid of their wives and children, are interwoven with the development of the West. The motif of the strength, hardihood and persistence of the farm-woman, who worked her land, brought up her children, and "carried on" is one which is frequently used in American novels.

What is the present status of women in this occupation? In 1910, there were 1,807,501, or 5.2 per cent

[5] *Ibid.*

of the total number of women ten years of age and over, employed in this occupation. In 1920, there were 1,084,128, or 2.7 per cent of the total number of women in the United States to be found in this industry. True there were a number of factors contributing to this decrease, such as changes in census enumeration, the business depression of 1920, and the beginning of "hard-times" in farming. The downward trend is an interesting one to observe.

Manufacturing. It is in industry itself that the most interesting tendencies away from "women's jobs" are to be seen. It is a far cry from 1840, when there were only seven occupations open to women workers,[6] to 1920, when there were some 232 occupations more or less ready to welcome women workers.

Nine of the eleven industries in which women predominate to-day are lineal descendants of their old tasks—the manufacture of clothing, corset-making, glove manufacturing, shirt, collar and cuff manufacturing, lace making, knitting, silk manufacturing, linen making and candy making. The resemblance between the old methods of production and the new is a faint one. The mechanical tasks of shifting bobbins, tending looms, or cutting paper, have become more or less synonymous with the kind of work women are "best suited" for to-day. A new division of labour has been effected, not by the conscious thought of the engineers of industry, not by the deliberate expressions of sex antagonisms, but by the haphazard growth and

[6] Harriet Robinson, *Loom and Spindle,* p. 4.

competitive demands of our industrial organisations mingled with those primitive concepts, which all of us carry in our subconscious minds.

The needs of modern industrialism are inexhaustive and inexorable. Almost two million women were engaged in manufacturing and mechanical industries in 1920—practically 22 per cent of the total number in industry. The new trend is indicated by the fact that female semi-skilled operatives in the iron and steel industries have increased 145.4 per cent since 1910. There were 34,262 women employed in these industries in 1920. Women operatives in the automobile factories, a comparatively new industry, have increased 408 per cent in the last census decade. Women have supplanted men in the manufacture of cigars and tobacco. In 1920 there were 97,822 women employed in this industry against 82,557 men. Women workers predominate in candy factories, the clothing industry, paper box factories, silk mills, linen mills, knitting mills, and lace and embroidery mills.

The trend has carried women into transportation, into trade and into clerical occupations. They have come to monopolise these occupations to such an extent that to-day many of these jobs are considered "women's jobs." There are 2,150 male telephone operators as against 90,117 female operators. There are 2,968 male stenographers and typists, as against 301,429 women in this field.

A study of the census report bristles with facts which indicate not only the extension of women's work, but also its concentration. More than fifty per cent

of the working women in the United States are to be found in the professional, domestic and personal services and clerical occupations. It is this concentration as well as the extension that causes us to pause and wonder as to the identity of this labour supply. Who are these women workers? What do they get out of their work?

Who Are the Working Women in the United States?

Many ideas are prevalent as to why women work. There are the women who want to make a little extra money. There are women who have no responsibilities, and work because it is "the thing to do." There are the women who work because they must, sheer poverty goading them on, as well as dependent families for whom they have assumed responsibility. And there are the women who must support themselves because no one else will or can. It is safe to assume that the forces, which are responsible for the majority of the women in industry are compulsory and economic. It is also safe to assume that the tremendous development of machine technique, the highly detailed division of labour, and the greater exploitability of unskilled woman labour have been responsible for the welcome which organised business has given to women workers in the face of all tradition and convention. In fact, it may be said, industry has been aided in its exploitation of women by those very conventions!

Nationality. The impression has often been fostered that the majority of women in industry are foreign-born, that they are either the wives or children of foreigners, who have a lower standard of living than that of the Americans and a social concept of women which does not measure up to our chivalrous standards. According to the 1920 census there are 8,549,511 women gainfully employed in the United States, of whom 3,733,329 were native-born white women. There are 1,571,289 Negro women gainfully employed. Although Negro women are largely employed in domestic service and agriculture, native-born white women are to be found in every industry. There are only 1,118,463 foreign-born women gainfully employed and 2,110,454 native white women of foreign parentage.

The peculiar psychology, which relegates the foreigner to occupations generally considered distasteful, or classed in the lowest rung of the ladder of occupations, is interesting to note. There seems to be a cycle of values accompanying the division of labour. Skilled crafts are for the most part in the hands of native-born Americans. Unskilled work is performed by foreigners. But even the foreigner, when he learns a little English, rebels at doing so-called specialised work for any length of time, such as the monotonous task of putting a thread on a screw. That job, therefore, goes to the women workers, native-born or foreign.

There are some jobs, however, that even native-born women will not do, and the strong "Hunky" women, fresh from the fields of Europe, take up the task at

this point. "We never use American women on assorting work," declared a representative of an iron and steel works in the Middle West. "These Hunky women are strong. They come to work with their husbands in the morning. They don't mind working in the rooms, where the men have to work 'stripped.' They can pull the sheets of metal apart as well as any man can. No American woman would want this kind of work." On the other hand, foreign women prefer work of this nature to the domestic work of the Negro servant. Thus the snobbery of occupations goes on. It is the only kind of snobbery in which the worker can indulge!

The 1,118,463 foreign-born women in industry represent 18 per cent of their total number in this country. Proportionately, this is larger than the percentage of native white women in industry. Most immigrants come to America to improve their economic condition, but despite the social concepts which they bring with them, the women are compelled to work for wages. Jewish and Bohemian women predominate in the clothing industry. Slavic, German, Italian and Russian women drift toward the textile, boot and shoe, and knit goods factories. Peasant women of Poland, Russia, Serbia and Hungary are to be found in the so-called basic industries—iron and steel, metal, and automobile industries. French women drift toward the silk and cotton factories. To some degree, the women enter the industries where their men-folk work. From the time when the first group of immigrant Irish women entered the New

England factories as scrubwomen and waste pickers, to the time when the textile industry became an industry predominantly non-English speaking, much water flowed under the bridge of social customs. It was not custom, however, but the need for cheap labour that made certain industries not only "she" trades, but also "she-foreign" or "she-Hunky."

A recent study made in Passaic, New Jersey, by the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor revealed the fact that 9,764 women and girls, or 46 per cent of the total female population of the town were breadwinners, nearly two-thirds of whom were foreign-born. The Polish, Italian and Austrian women were concentrated in the woollen mills. The women of American birth were to be found in offices, in selling or in professional occupations.

In Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, another industrial town where 8,800 women were gainfully employed, less than a fifth were foreign-born. The Austrian, Italian, Polish and Russian immigrants were concentrated in manufacturing industries, such as the silk mills, and in domestic and personal service, such as laundry workers, servants, janitresses, etc. The American women and those born in England, Ireland, Wales and Germany were employed in manufacturing, clerical trades, mercantile establishments, and professional service.[7]

The kinds of jobs available to women workers of foreign birth depend upon a number of factors. Often,

[7] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 23, *The Family Status of Bread-Winning Women,* p. 5.

their jobs are to be found in the same industry in which the men of their family, or even of the same nationality in their community, are employed. Frequently, certain racial characteristics are considered more adaptable to the demands of special tasks, and the women of a certain racial group receive the preference in the allotment of jobs. The jobs, especially the unskilled ones, go to the workers who will work for the least pay.

How Old Are These Women Workers? This is another question beset with generalised answers. "Women who work are young, they stay at the job only until they marry." "Women who work in factories are for the most part women who have raised their families and have nothing to do at home. A little extra money comes in handy."

Here again the figures indicate a different story. In 1920, there were 1,555,322 women from the ages of 15 to 19 years in industry—approximately 17 per cent of the total number of women in industry. Those between the ages of 20 and 24 constituted 15 per cent of the total. Between the ages of 25 and 44, there were 33.5 per cent of the working group, while in the age group of 45 and over there were 26.7 per cent of the total number of working women. The largest group of women working was found in the largest age group—that of 25 years and over.

Women of that age group are generally supposed to be at home taking care of the future generations!

The largest percentage of working women of the total number of women in the United States is to be

found in the age group from 20 to 24—38.1 per cent of the total number of women of this age group are in industry. In contrast, however, 15 per cent, or nearly a million and a half of the women 45 years of age and over, are in industry. Does not the position of the proverbial grandmother in the home by the fireside seem to be threatened?

Are They Single and Economically Free? Another preconception that seems to exist about all working women is that they are single women, who have entered the stores and factories until the time when "their Jack comes along," or that they are women who have no obligations, upon whom no one depends for financial assistance. People have gazed upon the factory girl in her "fur" coat and have shrugged their shoulders with the comment: "How do they do it?" or "They spend all their money on clothes," or "Isn't it terrible, the extravagance?" And a new generalisation is born in the public's mind, to wit: all factory girls work "for their clothes."

That economic hybrids such as purchase-on-installment, or that such facts as imitations of styles, exist, often escapes the attention of the opinionated public.

The same economic pressure which made it necessary and possible for women to enter industry also had its effect upon the home. The irregular employment of men, the undercut wages, the creation of new wants, all affected the family standard of living. Women and children were compelled to contribute to the family income. At first it was by some work in the home—washing, laundering, cleaning, sewing.

Better pay in the shops and factories soon made it feasible for these women to give up this work and leave the homes entirely.

Thousands of women still supplement their family incomes with home occupations. In 1920 there were 1,920,281 married women in industry, or 24.7 per cent of the total number of women working in the United States, and representing an increase of 129,620 over 1910.

The welfare of a community is judged by the welfare of the family unit. We do not have that long-distance point of view, which, like the Chinese, considers only the welfare and perpetuation of the tribe, with its customs and ancestral obligations. The small and individualistic American family of father, mother and children is still the basis of our community. The family income is therefore the all-important index of its welfare. The nation's wealth was estimated in 1926 as four hundred billion dollars.[8] The distribution of that wealth is very much a curve of troughs and crests, with the wage-earner's share ever in the trough. The income of the wage-earner's family to-day has come to depend upon the number of wage-earners in the family.

According to the Passaic study, out of almost 10,000 women working, four-fifths of the number were working outside the home. One-half of this number were married or had been married, and nearly three-quarters of the married women were mothers. Nine hun-

[8] Federal Trade Commission, *National Wealth and Income in the United States,* 1926.

dred of these mothers had children under five years of age.[9]

In a similar study made in 1920, in Manchester, New Hampshire, a textile, and boot and shoe town, involving 1,312 men and 885 women, 23.1 per cent of the women were married and contributed all their earnings to the family income, despite the fact that their husbands were wage-earning men. Similar studies made in different states by the Federal Women's Bureau, also indicated that not only are many working women married, but that their wages are an integral part of the family income.[10]

It may be argued, in fact, it has been argued, that the "extra" money earned by women goes for luxuries, for silk dresses and patent leather shoes and other expressions of "conspicuous consumption." A study of the standard of living of any worker's family, picked at random in any industrial community, reveals little self-indulgence. One may make a comparison of the standard of living of workers of different economic periods only by comparing the extent to which the products of the age are available to the worker. The town or village labourer of the seventeenth century had a decent standard of living if he had a comfortable cottage in which to live, exclusive of toilet facilities, running water, glass windows, stove, etc., which were conveniences not of his age, or if he had meat once a week, puddings on holidays, and a

[9] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 23, *loc. cit.*, p. 35.

[10] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 30, *The Share of Wage-Earning Women in Family Support,* pp. 25-65.

decent suit in which to go to church on Whitsuntide. The worker of the twentieth century demands a far different kind of menu, home, and means of enjoying his leisure. For him, there is the radio, possibly two suits of clothing, plumbing, a public school education for his children, and, hope against hope, some day a Ford for the family. The values of life have changed, and the standard of living which each of us has, includes, perforce, some of the fruits of our age.

Are the earnings of the unmarried women entirely their own? Since the war, girls of middle class homes and families have gone into industry, prodded on at first by the war impetus. They remained at their jobs, because they were loath to give up the economic independence which was theirs. These women have entered the professions, or have assumed jobs of responsibility in industry. It has been comparatively easy for them to leave home, to sever their economic ties with their families, and to go "on their own." It has become a great adventure, this going on one's own, the thing to do!

Our industrial cities are filled with young women, many of them well trained and well educated, who live alone in rooms, which are a combination bedroom and living room, the transformation easily being made through the use of a gayly covered couch with many cushions. They entertain their friends, male and female, break many of the conventions of their class, and live comparatively free lives outside of their working hours. They are accepted by society, with all their new ideas springing out of their economic independ-

ence. What is more significant, they do not break completely with their own class. They can slip back whenever they desire, and the opportunity presents itself. They are *vogelfrei,* as it were.

Because of the aggressive and independent lives of these girls, the idea had come to many good people that the factory girl, the shop girl, the telephone operator lives a life similar to that of these girls of the middle class. Nothing could be further from the truth. The new standards of living undoubtedly seep down to the working woman; but the barriers are there. In the first place, the average wages of the girl in industry precludes any such freedom. Secondly, and fully as important, the conventions of the working class are rigid, more rigid than they are in any other class. The workers are the last to be affected by changing psychology or institutions. Their property rights lie in the conventions of their class. A working girl who lives away from home, when her family lives in the same city, does so for one reason only (according to the opinion of the group), she has "gone bad." A girl who refuses to contribute to the family income, when there is great need for it, is, in the opinion of the group, on the verge of "going bad."

What Do Women Get Out of Industry? To discuss in detail the hours, wages and conditions under which women work is unnecessary in this study. The tale has often been told. To consider the economic and social returns to women who toil, and to review briefly some of the economic facts which contribute to the difficulties of organisation, may, however, be to the

point. Reward for work performed may be either monetary, or spiritual, or both.

Wages received by women workers are universally less than those received by men. The average earnings of women in industry in the United States vary from one-half to three-quarters of those of men.[11] In New York State alone, the richest industrial state of the Union, employing the largest number of women workers in the country, the average weekly earnings for women for April, 1926, was $18.30 for women as against $32.75, the average earnings for men.[12]

Current explanations for this difference in earnings are many. Let us consider a few of them. First, it has been declared that the woman worker's standard of living is lower than that of the male worker, and that she can "get along" on much less. This argument necessarily limits wages to the subsistence level. Working women have been able to live on less than men because they have been compelled to. One needs to look upon the demands of the women of the leisure class to recognise to what heights their needs may soar!

Secondly, it has been argued that the woman worker does not support a family, and has no economic responsibilities. This argument has been completely exploded. The average employer does not recognise family responsibilities in determining wage rates. Even the

[11] National Bureau of Economic Research, *Employment, Hours, and Earnings in Prosperity and Depression,* 1920-1922, p. 109.

[12] "The Industrial Bulletin," N. Y. State Industrial Commission, May, 1926, p. 216.

trade union does not consciously consider the economic responsibilities of its members. It secures the highest possible wage for married and single men alike. "This (uniform wage system) enables them (unmarried men) at one moment to fight the battle of higher wages from behind the petticoats of their hypothetical wives and children, and the next, to claim the wages thus won as their exclusive property." [13]

To what extent working women support families or contribute to family incomes is not generally known. In the study made by the Women's Bureau in Manchester, New Hampshire, interesting data on this subject was gathered. Of 1,312 men and 885 women interviewed, 53.4 per cent of the men were married and 23.1 per cent of the women. Practically all of the husbands and wives contributed all of their earnings to the family income. Of the 531 men and 602 women, who were unmarried, practically 88 per cent lived at home and contributed to the family income; 57.3 per cent of the women and 63.4 per cent of the men contributed all their earnings to their families.[14] On the whole, the men contributed more than the women because their earnings were considerably higher.

However, when the two factors affecting the disposal of the wages, were considered,—earnings and family relationship,—the findings presented a different aspect. "Although the men contributed much larger amounts, in relation to the size of their earnings, the

[13] Eleanor Rathbone, *The Disinherited Family*, p. 56.
[14] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 30, *loc. cit.*, p. 57.

contributions of the two sexes were of practically the same proportion." [15]

This was due, of course, to the greater disparity in wages between men and women and also to the larger number of men who were married. "In two groups of men and women, where relationship to family and earnings were similar, the women contributed all their earnings to a greater extent than did the men." [16] The assumption that working women lack family responsibilities seems to be challenged by the results of the few available surveys.

A third argument is that women's work, requiring no skill or training, is worth no more than it receives. One often wonders if it is not the amount of pay received for the job, that determines the skill and the rank. Is a woman who dips chocolates in a candy factory any the less skilled than the man who presses garments? The length of time it takes to become a proficient worker at both jobs is about the same. Nevertheless there is a great difference between the wages of one occupation and the other.

The imputation that money is identified with skill is not at all uncommon in our daily life. The man of wealth is considered wise in the ways of politics, business, and even in cultural and æsthetic standards. He may be a boor or a fool. who has inherited his wealth or acquired it by some fortuitous stroke of fortune, but there are people ready to hang on his every word. Is it any less plausible, therefore, to consider brick-

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

laying or machine-turning a skilled trade, because the men in those trades happen to be so strategically situated and so well organised as to have secured high wages for themselves and a vested interest in their occupations? Men employed in unskilled work receive lower wages than skilled workers. In the economics of an industry, wages are determined to a certain degree by the amount of skill and training required for a particular job. The wages of unskilled women workers are generally less than those of unskilled male workers because of the many "fictions" of industry. Feminine sex plus an unskilled occupation equal lower wages.

A fourth argument is that women are subsidised by their families, and by society, in the form of special legislation limiting hours, defining conditions of work, and establishing a minimum wage. Cause or effect—which is which? Are they "protected" because their earnings are so low that they cannot live, or are their earnings low because it has become an accepted principle that women will be "protected"? May the Sphinx answer.

Another argument, and a most realistic one, is that women are a temporary factor in the labour supply and are paid low wages in order to make up the costs of replacement. The early part of this chapter would indicate that not only more women, but also married women, are entering industry. What this will mean to the ephemeral nature of women's work will bear watching.

The Great Waste. Of late, socially conscious in-

dividuals and groups have been disturbed at the waste in industry, wastes which are by-products of our competitive capitalist system. Not only is this waste to be found in material goods, but also in the unintelligent and ruthless use of human labour power—a greater and more serious waste. Women workers are even more subject to this unreasonable utilisation of labour power than men, though the indictment holds good for all workers.

The waste involved in the failure to adjust a woman worker to a job, which she is mentally and physically capable of doing cannot be measured. Think of the many women who go on, year after year, as stenographers, saleswomen, candy-makers, or biscuit packers, who have the latent capacities to do other jobs, perhaps of a more creative nature. There is little encouragement either financially or socially to make a change. During the war, attempts were made at adjustment to jobs for both men and women. The results were particularly amazing among women. It had never been dreamed that women could be acetylene welders, street-car conductors, or munition workers. Not only did women work successfully at these trades, but those who had never had an opportunity to do any work involving responsibility, or calling upon their creative faculties, found themselves in a unique position for self-expression, which the routine, monotonous "women's jobs" of the days of normalcy never presented.

The relative efficiency of a man and woman worker at the same job should be considered in the matter

of adjustment. Little scientific data has been gathered on this point. The statements as to the greater efficiency of men at certain jobs are empirical and based largely upon the experiences which men have acquired at their jobs.

In a report of the Cheney Silk Mills, in Pennsylvania,[17] a study was made of the relative efficiency of male and female weavers. It was found that the men turned out 65.37 per cent quantity, whereas the women turned out 50 per cent quantity. Each man, however, operated on the average of 4.18 looms, whereas the women operated 3.3 looms. The average male weaver produced 30.74 per cent more than the average female worker produced, but the average woman came 2.42 per cent nearer to perfect quality product than did the man.

The waste involved in the failure to train women workers for better positions is a serious one. Practically every trade union has experienced a breakdown in its apprenticeship system for men as well as women. The specialisation of industry has in many instances made apprenticeship which is after all nothing but training for a craft, unnecessary. This fact notwithstanding, several unions have closed their doors to women members in time past, because women would not consider spending several years in apprenticeship.

Most of the vocational courses in schools and philanthropic organisations train men and boys for the

[17] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Monthly Labor Review," May, 1924.

better paying trades or the more skilled crafts. Vocational courses for women consist for the most part in instruction in "women's work"—millinery, sewing, cooking and housekeeping.

This failure to train women for definite occupations in the industrial world is the result of the idea that women remain in industry but a short time. The temporary aspect of women's work is gradually fading away. Not only are there more women in industry today, but older women and married ones are a great part of the labour force. Instances of women of the professions remaining at their work after marriage and coming back to it after childbearing, are forecasts of what will happen as more women receive greater satisfaction from their work in the industrial world. With the continued restriction of immigration, the labour market will call upon more women to enter industry. Why should they not enter under the best possible conditions with the best possible training for work, which may, by virtue of economic necessity as well as personal inclination, become a life-work for them?

Another form of waste in industry, which has recently been much discussed, is the periodic unemployment of workers, due to the business cycle. The industrial depression of 1921 affected first the textile, clothing, hosiery and underwear, leather, and boot and shoe industries. The percentage of decrease in employment in these industries between January, 1920 and January, 1921, was about 35 per cent. In New York State, the first industries to be affected by

the depression were the clothing and textile industries.[18] It happens that these industries are largely women-employing industries.

The industrial depression of 1921 was responsible for the unemployment of almost four million workers. Because of the types of industries affected, a large proportion of this number consisted of women, who were among the first to be thrown out of work. It has been a recognised tendency in periods of industrial depression, that the unskilled workers, the workers on the fringe of industry, as it were, are thrown out of employment at the first indication of the down-curve of business. Here again, the woman worker is usually among the first to be affected, for she is still a part of this fringe of industry.

Seasonal unemployment is a factor in many industries. The clothing and wearing apparel industries, coal mining, the building trades, canning and agriculture are only a few of the industries subject to frequent and periodic unemployment. In some of these industries, clothing, canning and wearing apparel, the woman worker is predominant. She is therefore subject to additional periods of unemployment due to continued changes in styles and seasons.

These two causes of unemployment—the industrial depression and the seasonal trade—have directly affected the employment of women workers and incidentally their economic status. Low wages mean small savings and a limited reserve for the period of un-

[18] "The Industrial Bulletin," June, 1923, p. 191.

employment. A study of the actual effect of unemployment upon working women has yet to be made.

Probably the most subtle influence in the worker's lack of interest in his or her job is the psychological impasse that the machine itself created. This is especially true of the unskilled woman worker. How much interest can a girl working in a large biscuit company, packing thousands of crackers a day, take in her job? The stamp of machine-methods has impressed itself upon her mind and has numbed it. "Aw, I can never get a better job; I don't know enough, and I can't do anything but pack," was the tired answer of a girl who had been working for some five or six years at the same job, and at a wage no greater than she had received the first year. These monotonous jobs—keeping pace with the speed of the machine—have become women's jobs, because women are "docile and non-aggressive—and conscientious." The millions of semi-skilled operatives in the manufacturing industries are under the same stamp. How can an interest in the job be expected? In fact, it is not expected, and the foreman who stated that "we put the brains into the machines before we put the women on them," spoke truly.

There is a greater waste, which must be mentioned in passing. It consists of the vast stores of unutilised and potential woman labour power. The thousands of women of the leisure class who produce nothing of economic value, the thousands of women of the middle class, who have brought up their children, have built their homes, and who now fritter

away their creative faculties in card parties and women's clubs, and the thousands of women of the working class, who straddle the duty of a home and a job doing both poorly, because the home, women's "original sphere," has been the last to be scientifically organised, the last to take advantage of the inventions of the age, are the three groups of women who have the potentiality of vast economic contributions. They are barren because of the dominance of senseless competition and stupid tradition in economic life.

What do these women gain, who have entered industry? Has the necessary wrench from the home meant a greater liberation, a greater personal development, a resurrection of self-respect for the working women? Sadly enough this is not always true, for women have fitted into the great machine pattern of industry as cogs which bring their own form with them, or as bolts which are slipped into specific places. They comprise, largely, the Great Unskilled and the Great Low Paid.

The machine has been so perfected, has mechanised production to such an extent, that the skill of the craftsman has become an ever-negligible factor. The labour force of industry is being diluted, as it were, by a type of unskilled labour which is becoming a permanent factor. In itself, it may be nothing. But in its social and economic implications; in the fact that the men and women of this labour supply become accustomed to an immobile job, which leads nowhere, and to a low wage, which does not permit of nutritive food, decent clothing, or comfortable shelter; in the

fact that the spirit is killed or crippled; there lies the danger. It is the tendency to create the immobile pattern, as a well-known American economist said of another situation, "a kind of mobility within immobility."

CHAPTER III

CONSTITUTIONAL BARS AND LIMITATIONS

THE trade union, like other social and economic institutions, has developed a body of thought and custom which concerns itself primarily with a man's world. The business of making a living, as we understand it, is still fundamentally a man's business. Small wonder, therefore, that the rules of the game are men's rules, and that those rules when applied to women cause friction, to say the least. The trade union, as an "association of wage-earners for the purpose of improving the condition of their working lives,"[1] developed historically out of workingmen's clubs, organised ostensibly for social purposes.

If we can believe Johnson and Addison[2] in their vivid description of eighteenth century clubs, we must make a mental note that they did not differ greatly from the clubs of to-day. Conviviality and good humour, light talk and serious, smokes and stimulants were part of the programme. Above all, the clubs were for men in the sanctum of their own sex and souls.

The trade union was the workingman's club and though organised primarily for economic purposes it became his refuge from the worries of home and family.

[1] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 1.
[2] "Addison and Johnson and 18th Century Clubs," essays in the *Tatler*.

It brought him in the company of his friends and fellow-workers. The trade union language, therefore, is a man's jargon. The rituals of procedure are suited for men, and the meeting place in the past was synonymous with the neighbourhood saloon—that institution which was for years the central meeting place for the workers' social and economic activities in every industrial country. From a purely psychological standpoint, therefore, one may question whether the trade union members would readily open the doors of their sanctuary and admit women within the inner portals.

In the first place, working men were slow to recognise that the interests of women workers were linked with their own, and that the strength of their organisation depended upon the organisation of women. In the second place, the conflict between the trade unionist's sense of his own economic welfare and the desire to preserve his "place in the sun" reflected itself in the body of constitutional law which the trade union developed.

The constitution of the trade union, like the constitution of a government, reflects the social ideas of the "powers that be." The constitutions of trade unions, therefore, indicate two attitudes on the part of the movement with reference to the woman worker—the one, an attitude of chivalry and a desire to protect the woman worker; the other, a keen and conscious fear of the potential strength of the woman worker as a competitive labour force. A brief survey of the trade union attitude toward the working women in England

indicates that this conflict was evident from the very beginning of the trade union movement. In 1829, the Spinners' Association, which apparently was one of the strongest unions in the cotton industry, was suddenly threatened with large numbers of cheaply paid women labourers. After much agitation it was decided not only to urge equal pay for equal work, for both men and women, but to admit women spinners into the union. The employers, of course, refused to pay women the same amount that they paid to men (a fact which the Spinners' Association seems to have counted upon), and the women workers continued to remain unorganised and to receive lower wages than the men.

It was not until 1874 that an intensive movement to organise women workers was undertaken in England, and then not by the British trade unions, but by the Women's Trade Union League which attacked the problem via "sympathetic ladies and gentlemen on the outside." Between the years 1874 and 1886, the League established some thirty or forty women's societies in England and Scotland, mostly of dressmakers and milliners, which were then distinctly "women's trades." In the other trades, the unions refused to admit women workers to their membership. The women's societies developed a policy of friendliness with the employers, attempting to prevent strikes and to promote arbitration. They became financially independent, and a comparatively strong factor in economic bargaining. In 1886, the British Trades Union movement held a series of conferences

with the Women's Trade Union League, urging them to adopt a more militant plan of action in consonance with their own policy. The women held out for admission to the men's unions and this was finally secured, but only on special terms. There are still several unions in England to-day which bar women members. The most prominent of these are the skilled Engineering unions, the Amalgamated Core Makers in the foundry trades, the Upholsterers, and the Typographical Association.[3]

The story of the organisation of women in the United States is not very different. The first men's unions organised in 1828 were the carpenters, printers, and cordwainers. There were no women employed in these industries. At this time, however, there were about 66,000 women employed in the cotton mills of New England. When the cotton mill workers of Dover, New Hampshire, marched out of the factories in 1828 to protest against a reduction in wages, they were moved by the same spirit that motivates an organised union strike. They held street parades, carried placards, and arranged protest meetings, and despite their brief industrial experience, won their strike. Neither the men's unions of New England nor Philadelphia apparently took much interest in these frequent rebellions on the part of the women workers in those early days.

Little can be found on the subject of the organisations of women workers from this period until

[3] Barbara Drake, *Women in Trade Unions in England,* pp. 5-9.

1865, when the platform of the National Labour Union, one of the first federations of trade unions in the United States, contained the following resolution:

"Resolved, that with equal application of the fundamental principles of our republican-democratic government, and a sound monetary system, there could be no antagonism between the interests of the working men and working women of this country, nor between any of the branches of productive industry—the direct operation of each, when not prevented by unjust monetary laws, being to benefit all the others by the production and distribution of the comforts and necessaries of life; and that the adoption by the national government of the financial policy set forth in this platform will put an end to the oppression of working women, and is the only means of securing to them as well as to the working men, the just reward of their labour.

"Resolved, therefore, that we pledge our individual and undivided support to the sewing women and daughters of toil in this land, and would solicit their hearty co-operation, knowing, as we do, that no class of industry is so much in need of having their condition ameliorated as the factory operatives, sewing women, etc., of this country." [4]

This resolution was the first expression of interest on the part of trade union organisations in the United States, in the welfare of women workers. But it by no means advocated trade unions for the "daughters of toil"! That same year, the National Labour Union

[4] John B. Andrews and W. D. Bliss, *History of Women in Trade Unions,* U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, vol. x, p. 88.

passed a resolution urging equal pay for equal service with men, and deploring the practice of "working women and children ten to fifteen hours a day at starvation prices," and declaring it to be "brutal to the extreme, and submersive to the health and intelligence and morality of the nation, and demanding the interposition of the law." [5]

In 1869, the International Grand Lodge of the Order of the Knights of St. Crispin, a union in the boot and shoe industry, passed a resolution, tendering to those "working women, who have joined the Order of the Daughters of St. Crispin, their hearty sympathy, and pledge them our full support in all honest efforts to improve their social or material conditions." [6]

The Daughters of St. Crispin, an organisation of women shoe workers, was the first women's trade union in the United States having a national organisation. The relationship between the women's union and the men's was apparently most friendly and co-operative. This feeling was attributed to the absence of sex competition in the industry. The women shoe workers performed the same work in the factories at this time as they had previously in their homes or in the warehouses. Consequently, the union men were most cordial to the women's union. There never was any indication of amalgamation between the Knights of St. Crispin and the Daughters. There was no need for antagonism between them because during the brief

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Proceedings of Knights of St. Crispin,* 1869, p. 2.

span of their existence, their jobs never tended to overlap or compete.

The Knights of Labour, a national labour organisation, succeeding the National Labour Union, was structurally and philosophically a labour organisation of an entirely different ilk. Its philosophy assumed that the interests and viewpoints of all workers were identical. The organisation attempted to unite the workers of varied degrees of skill and of varied crafts and industries into one unit. The question of admitting the women to membership however, was fraught with all sorts of difficulties. The Reading Assembly of the Knights of Labour adopted a clause at its meeting in 1878, that it should "aim" to secure for both sexes equal pay for equal work. The following year, a resolution admitting women to membership in the Knights of Labour and permitting them to form Assemblies, under the same conditions as men, was ignominiously defeated. This, in the face of the preamble of the constitution of the Knights of Labour, which called upon its members to endeavour to secure for both sexes equal pay for equal work, is interesting.

In 1879, a committee was appointed to prepare a special ritual for the government of Assemblies for women. A resolution was adopted that women be admitted to the Knights of Labour as soon as this ritual was printed. At the fifth session of the Knights of Labour, in 1881, the matter of the special ritual came up.

In an interview which the writer had with Terence V. Powderly, Grand Master Workman of the Knights

of Labour, he stated, with a wry smile: "They (the membership) seemed to think it unholy for women to use the same initiation rituals as men. They fought for hours on this matter, even after they had passed the resolution admitting women into the organisation. I got up and showed them how ridiculous it was to admit women into the Order on the same basis as men, demand equal pay for equal work, and then turn around and demand special initiation rituals." Mr. Powderly's pleas bore fruit, for the matter of special rituals was dropped and women were admitted on the same terms as were men.

The Knights of Labour was a unique organisation. Born in the adolescent period of American industrial development, it developed an economic philosophy to justify the fact that the rising class of employers had sprung from the class of workers. Its philosophy was one which recognised no separation of interest between workers and employers. It declared further that the division of labour in industry could have no effect upon the mutual interests of all the workers.

It did not recognise the superiority of the skilled labourer as against the unskilled. In fact, it made definite efforts to organise unskilled labour. When it came to bucking the tide of social opinion in the matter of admitting women who were largely unskilled labourers, the philosophy and policies of the organisation went by the board for a number of years.

At its height, the membership of the Knights of Labour was estimated at six hundred thousand, of which approximately fifty thousand were women mem-

bers. The largest District Assembly was organised in Massachusetts, when the total membership in 1886 was estimated at 80,000. In January, 1887, it was estimated that 13,200 women had been admitted to membership in the Knights of Labour in Massachusetts.

After the amendment admitting women to membership in the Knights of Labour was passed, a number of women's assemblies representing tailoresses, tobacco-workers, shoe-workers, waitresses, printers, domestics, etc., were organised. In 1885, women delegates were sent to the Convention of the Knights of Labour. It was voted, at this convention, that a committee be appointed to collect statistics on women's work. At the next annual convention in 1886, the special committee of three, on Women's Work, reported they had formed "a permanent organisation, the object of which will be to investigate the abuses to which our sex is subjected by unscrupulous employers. . . . To agitate the principles which our Order teaches of equal pay for equal work, and the abolition of child labour." They elected officers, constituted themselves a Woman's Department, and appointed a General Investigator, who should devote her time to organisation, education, and collecting information on women's work.

Complaints were made to the General Investigator that women were rejected from local assemblies because of their sex. The *Journal of United Labour,* the official organ of the Knights of Labour, commented on this attitude and declared it was "wrong, unjust and

unmanly to reject a woman simply because she is a woman."

The General Investigator found that the lack of organisation among women, in many industrial towns, was due to the "indifference of their brother toilers." She found also that the platform of "equal pay for equal work" was but a mockery as far as the Order was concerned. The Woman's Department lasted just four years.[7]

American industry was growing up. As Prof. Hoxie stated, "machinery was forcing a materialistic contest." The division between the skilled and the unskilled worker was becoming more pronounced. The separation between employers and workers was certainly more universal. The interests of all workers were not identical, nor was there an identity of interest, so called, between capital and labour.

The American Federation of Labor superseded the Knights of Labour because it recognised these facts. The strength of the unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor depended upon the core of skilled crafts in each industry. The strategic position which skilled workmen held in the industry undoubtedly made possible the formation of strong trade unions of the type found in the building trades, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and the Brotherhood of Carpenters. If unskilled workers were organised, they were likely to be dependent upon the locals of skilled workers in the union. The difference between skilled

[7] *Proceedings of General Assembly of Knights of Labour,* 1886, p. 1537; 1581-1588.

and unskilled workers became more than a difference in skill and training or a difference in the size of the pay envelope. It became a difference in the psychology of the worker. This psychological factor is responsible for a sort of class struggle within the labour movement.

The philosophy and tactics of the American Federation of Labor were successful in this transition period of American industry. The machine had not yet usurped the position and pride of the skilled workman. His skill was at a premium, his craft was his art, and the psychology of superiority that accompanies the individual in a strategic economic position was to be found everywhere. There was no love lost between the skilled workmen and the unskilled. "They (the skilled workers) worry about the unskilled when they are in danger of losing their advantage and places, due to the unstinted competition of the unskilled, and they then develop a 'labour as a whole' attitude." [8]

The majority of the women entering industry in the last fifty years have come in as unskilled workers. The figures of the preceding chapter indicate that women workers predominate in industries having specialised processes It was natural, therefore, for skilled craftsmen to look askance at unskilled women workers—first, because they were potential economic competitors, and second, because they were branded by existing social concepts. On the other hand unskilled workmen were embittered at the thought of women entering the already overcrowded labour market and taking their jobs from them. "Woman's place is in the

[8] Robert Hoxie, *Trade Unionism in the United States*, p. 97.

home," the unskilled workman growled, as he looked sidewise at the woman worker at the next bench. "Woman's place is in the home," the skilled workman cried, as he looked down and heard the cry of his unskilled brother, or as he perceived his own craft revolutionised by the machine, and dismembered into specialised processes in which unskilled women workers were taking their places. Meanwhile, women entered the industrial field in greater and greater numbers.

What was the attitude of the young, aggressive Federation of Labor toward the woman worker? One of the early conventions extended representation in future annual meetings to all women's labour organisations on an equal footing with men. The annual report of 1883 contains a vivid plea in behalf of the downtrodden women workers. ". . . In the most civilised country on the face of the globe a vast multitude of girls and women condemned to struggle for very existence. They are doubly handicapped by poverty and sex. Neither sentiment nor humanity counts in the race for gain. The weaker become the prey of the stronger when the labour market is glutted, and keen competition disposes of the products of labour at the lowest market price. . . . It is the creed of the labour movement that labour should be fairly paid for, that the labourer should be more than a passive factor in the contract that disposes of his labour. It is further the creed of the labour movement that equal amounts of work should bring the same price, whether performed by man or woman. In other words, that the value to the

purchaser, not the necessity of the seller, should fix the standard of a day's wages." [9]

In 1885 the American Federation of Labor convention sent out a call to the working women of the country, urging them to organise. In 1892 and 1894 it promoted special legislation for women workers, demanding laws forbidding the use of foot-power machinery where women were employed, and urging the limitation of hours of work for women to eight hours a day. In 1913 the convention of the American Federation of Labor voted an assessment of one cent per capita to be expended in whatever way was deemed best for the benefit of the wage-earning women of the country. In 1917, with the pressure of the war and the influx of women workers into industry, a restatement was made by the American Federation of Labor convention on the matter of equal pay for equal work.

In 1918 the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, for the first time in its recorded history, put on a corps of eight or nine women organisers to carry on an intensive organisation campaign among women. At the same convention a request was made by the Executive Council that the national and international unions, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, change their constitutions and admit women into their membership. There were then some nine or ten international unions prohibiting the admission of women to their unions.

That same convention, however, refused to amend the Constitution to include a clause requiring the elec-

[9] *Proceedings of the American Federation of Labor Convention*, 1883, p. 11.

tion of two women to the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. (There has never been a woman member on the Executive Council.) The objection was explained as follows: "We hold such action would be class legislation and would be detrimental to the best interests of this Federation. If you say that two women have a right to membership in the Executive Council, you have the same right to say ten women should be members. The women delegates have the same rights and privileges as the men, and they have the same rights to aspire to any office in the A. F. of L."

In 1922, at the convention of the American Federation of Labor, Luther E. Steward, president of the National Federation of Federal Employés, introduced a resolution to the effect that the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor issue charters directly to women in occupations where the unions, in those occupations, refused to admit women to membership. This resolution was reported out by the Committee on Laws of the convention with the following statement:

"The A. F. of L., since its inception, has done everything in its power to organise the women workers of the country and to obtain for them equal rights, political as well as economical. We, therefore, now reiterate all the many previous declarations of the Federation, that we stand for equal rights for women in industry, as well as for equal rights for women in the political and industrial life of our nation. A large percentage of the international unions now admit to membership

women workers of their trade or calling. There are, however, a few international unions that have not yet decided to admit to membership women workers, due largely to *the nature* of their work. Considerable progress is being continually made to reach a better understanding with international unions on this subject.

"We, therefore, offer the following substitute: That those international and national organisations that do not admit women workers to membership give early consideration for such admission.

"That where women workers are refused admission to international unions having jurisdiction over the industry in which they are employed, the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. take up the subject with the international unions and endeavour to reach an understanding as to the issuance of Federal charters."

This revised resolution was accepted by the convention. It had been revised in order that the autonomy of the international unions might not be interfered with.

Yet, during the year 1922, action resulting from this resolution brought the Executve Council of the American Federation of Labor much grief. The International Journeyman Barbers' Union was one of the unions that did not admit women workers. Several hundred women barbers employed in Seattle, Washington, were eager to become members of the union. They applied to the Seattle local of the Barbers' Union. but were naturally refused admission. They formed themselves into a Woman's Auxiliary, and demanded admission to the Central Trades and Labour Council

of Seattle. They were refused admission to the Council on the ground that they were not a union. Application was then made to the American Federation of Labor for a charter on the basis of the 1922 resolution. This was granted, but later had to be recalled at the vehement protest of the International Journeyman Barbers' Union.

In the 1923 convention, held in Portland, Oregon, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, in its annual report, again considered the matter of the organisation of women. A resolution was passed recommending that the president call a conference of officials of the organisations concerned with this problem, and prepare a plan of organisation among women workers. Acting upon this resolution, President Gompers called several conferences during the year to discuss this problem. The first conference was held February 12, 1924. Representatives from various large unions having women in the union, as well as representatives from unions having women in the industry but not in the union, were present at these conferences. A plan of organisation for the establishment of a woman's department within the American Federation of Labor similar to other industrial departments was considered.

Objections came fast and furious. There was opposition to the creation of a new department, and to the fact that the American Federation of Labor would undertake the organisation of women within an industry which was the decided province of the international unions. "After considering the whole situation

the Council felt that because of the very few pledges of substantial support to a separate and distinctive movement confined to organising women wage-earners, it was obvious that a general concerted action would be impracticable." [10]

The 1924 convention of the American Federation of Labor, held in El Paso, Texas, accepted the report of the Executive Council on this matter without discussion. Actually there was no reason for debate, for the report contained only a vague reiteration of the policy of the American Federation of Labor:

I. That responsibility for organising women in industry be left in the hands of the Executive Council at the opportune time, with the co-operation of international unions, to initiate a drive in such localities as seem to them advisable. As this is primarily an administrative function, it should be handled as such.

II. That the Federation can promote the organisation of women in industry by making available informational sources and material and by carrying on the educational work necessary to a better understanding of the problem of women in industry and the necessity for constructive action.

III. And to endeavour to secure the co-operation of all interested in the protection and the promotion through organisation of the rights and interests of the women wage-earners of America.

Then follows the "Tentative Plan for Joint Undertaking of Organisation of Women in Industry" included in the Report of the Executive Council to the 1925 convention of the American Federation of Labor held in Atlantic City, New Jersey:

1. Invite national and international unions to co-operate.
2. Final conference—during convention at Atlantic City.

[10] *Report of Executive Council of the A. F. of L.*, 1924, p. 49.

3. Information to be gathered in advance (Data to be gathered by Federation from U. S. Census of Manufactures and state reports).
   - List of industries in locality.
   - Number of workers in each—men, women.
   - Workers by nationalities—men, women.
   - Ratio of organised to unorganised.
   - Firms which have organised company unions.
   - Employer organisations—by whom controlled.
   - Strength and control of anti-union sentiment.
   - Local Map:
   - Chart industrial information.
   - Names and addresses of companies.
   - Number of men and women employed.
   - Local Economic Conditions.
   - Organise a local bureau to develop and apply data.
4. Campaign—Designate A. F. of L. representative as organiser to take charge.
   - Fix date of opening.
   - Ask all co-operating organisations to select their organisers for the campaign to send them to locality for preliminary conference two or three days before opening date.
   - All unions to hold special union meetings in this interval.
   - Special efforts to get favourable public opinion. Interview organised groups, women's clubs, newspaper editors and reporters.
   - Information bureau to disseminate data and literature.
   - Mass meeting under leadership Central Labour Union, assisted by President of the A. F. of L. and presidents of international unions.
   - Mass meeting to be followed by a week of open meetings for union education.
5. Then the sustained effort: Follow through campaign—
   - Organisers of nationals and internationals, local union representatives begin the work of getting new members.
   - At least bi-weekly meetings of organisers to co-ordinate plans and work. Occasional review of work by Federation representative.
   - Frequent general public meetings.
6. Literature.
   - Federation to supply general literature.
   - Each organisation to supply literature for its own jurisdiction.

This last report sums up the official attitude of the American Federation of Labor toward the question of organising women. A long list of resolutions favouring equal pay for equal work; a number of resolutions urging actual organisation of women workers; several statements deploring the exploitation of women workers, and one or two plans for intensive campaigns among women workers—this is the story of the official policy of the American Federation of Labor throughout its history.

A comparison between the policies of many of the international and local unions on the question of organising women and those of the American Federation of Labor indicate that the latter has had a far more liberal and far-sighted official attitude than the unions upon which it depended for carrying into operation its official attitude.

The psychology of an institution, such as the American Federation of Labor, which passes resolutions, and "stands for" certain policies that it cannot carry out, is subject to deeper analysis than can be given here. The psychologist may call it a type of wish-fulfillment, expressing a sincere desire to organise women, to obtain for them the higher standard of living for which the American worker is noted. Or he may interpret the resolutions as the reflection of minds that are loath to act but have a reputation of liberalism to live up to. Whichever interpretation is accepted, one cannot minimise the importance of prominent organisations which take a stand in the community for a certain policy and become a factor in crystallising

public opinion. How important is the sanction of a "drive" or a cause endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce or the local Rotary Club! The sense of comfort that "something is really being done" when actually nothing is being done, an experience we all enjoy.

The Policy of International and Local Unions

The strength of the American labour movement depends upon the strength of its individual unions. The autonomy which the union has had in the past, has been a strategic factor in its development. It was this autonomy that enabled the individual union to work out its organisation policy and tactics according to the structure and demands of the particular industry. It was responsible for a type of industrial unionism in the United Mine Workers, in an industry where workplaces and workmen are scattered according to the "lay" of the coal veins. On the other hand, the selfsame autonomy was responsible for the "pure and simple" craft unionism to be found in the carpenter's or the barber's trade.

The policy of the different international unions with reference to admitting women to their membership varies with the industry. In those industries where women are comparative newcomers, and the trade is considered a "man's job," the bars of the union are up. On the other hand, in those industries where women are preponderant, the bars are down. In many of the latter unions, however, special regulations, spe-

cial dues, and special benefits for the woman member are enforced.

In 1920 the Federal Women's Bureau made a study of those unions, whose constitutions or by-laws barred women from membership. They were the Elastic Goring Weavers' Association, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the Pattern Makers' League and the International Moulders' Union. The Journeyman Barbers' Union, not mentioned in this inquiry, was another of the unions to be included in this group. In the spring of 1924 a questionnaire was sent to the international unions by the research department of the American Federation of Labor. It endeavoured to secure information on the actual number of women in the trade unions and the official policy of the unions toward women members. To this questionnaire, all the above unions, and a number of additional ones—among them the Teamsters' and Chauffeurs' Union, the Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Drop Forgers and the United Mine Workers—replied that they officially opposed the admission of women. One official of the Blacksmiths' Union wrote: "We are positively opposed to the employment of women in this trade. If there ever was a job that is a man's job, it is this work." It is to be understood that the unions listed constitutionally bar women from their unions. The list by no means includes those international and local unions which tacitly bar women from membership.

During the war there was a marked increase in the number of women core-makers in foundries. The con-

stitution of the Moulders' Union (article 13, section 6), however, made provisions to expel any member who gave instruction to any female worker in the foundry or at any branch of the trade.[11]

The opposition of the Moulders' Union was based on the fact that core-making was considered a phase of the moulders' apprenticeship.[12] When women became core-makers the job was transformed into a specialised process, leading to no other occupation. The man apprentice, therefore, was unable to secure a job as a core-maker. The position of the skilled craftsman was endangered. The result was an opposition, not to the machine that simplified the core-making process, but to the woman worker. The need to preserve their craft compelled the Moulders' Union not only to prohibit women from entering the union, but also to pass resolution after resolution opposing the employment of female labour in the industry. However, this did not prevent the 1924 convention of the Moulders' Union from deciding to give *moral support* to the general movement of the American Federation of Labor for organising women workers in *other trades*.[13]

The constitutional prohibition of women in the Journeyman Barbers' Union was another example of the mix-up of economic and social factors in the determination of their policy. There was a time in the his-

[11] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 12, *New Position of Women in Industry*, p. 158.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[13] "Moulders' Journal," August, 1924.

tory of the trade when there were no women barbers. In the last ten years, however, women barbers have appeared throughout the West and Mid-West. The last four or five years ushered in the "bob" or short-hair style among women. With this style came a tremendous boom in beauty parlours and beauty culture among women, and a concomitant increase in the number of women engaged in the industry.

The Barbers' Union, through section 67 of its constitution, successfully kept these women out. Applications for membership from "lady barbers" were received by local unions in Chicago, Seattle and Portland. They were, of course, turned down. The women barbers continued to hold their jobs. Those shops in which they were employed became of necessity open-shop. The Union either lost control of them, or could not gain control since one or more workers in the shop were not members of the union.

At the fifteenth convention of the Barbers' Union, held at Indianapolis in September, 1924, the question of admitting women came up for discussion. One of the delegates summed up the questions which were apparently troubling more than one delegate present in the following manner:

"Do female barbers as a whole compare favourably as workmen with male barbers?

"Do you think their sense of honour from a pecuniary standpoint would be as strong as a man's in protesting against a cut in wages or the lengthening of working hours?

"Do you think the presence of, say, three or four

ladies in a shop of ten or twelve chairs would be conducive to good discipline?

"In view of the fact of her physical make-up, is it *not a fact that if she were comely to look upon, and possessed extreme charm, would it not have* a tendency to create discord among the men, who, up to the time of her admittance to membership, *were real working brothers?*

"Is it not a fact that the real reason for employing women in barber shops is the questionable worth or drawing power as a physical attraction, and not on account of their workmanship?

"Allowing for her attractiveness, and also for her workmanship, would she be as capable at forty-five or fifty years of age, with her drawing power limited, and her attractiveness practically gone, as a man at the same age?

"In view of the fact that we will probably pass on a pension fund or provide in some way for our older members, when they are no longer able to stand at the chair, at this coming convention, does the female barber figure as an asset or a liability?

"Finally, brothers, will it pay to have built up an organisation to where it is to-day, running smoothly, gaining slowly but surely, and admit an unknown quality, who from the first of it will be nothing but a *blithering liability?*" [14]

In this summarisation is to be found every objection employed by trade unionists to the admission of women workers: inferiority of workmanship, inability

[14] *Proceedings of Journeyman Barbers' International Union Convention,* 1924.

to organise, Lorelei propensities of women workers, and the danger of intrusion by "blithering liabilities."

But the clause barring women from membership to the union was amended at this convention as a result of the arguments of another delegate who pleaded, "Now, listen, brothers—give us a chance. It isn't a moral question. It is merely a question of business control. It is an economic question, a question of putting yourself in a position to control the labour power in your organisation, to control the business in your community, and bring it into your own shop." [15]

As long as women workers do not seriously threaten the economic position of the elastic gore-weavers, the carpenters, the pattern-makers, the teamsters, the blacksmiths, and the miners, the unions in these trades will continue to bar them from membership. As soon as the trades become revolutionised by some machine process, and women are employed in greater numbers than they are to-day, then indeed will these unions be compelled to reconsider their policy in the same fashion as the Barbers' Union has recently been compelled to do.

On the other hand, many of the unions that have admitted women into their membership have done so with strings attached to the admission in the form of *special dues* and *benefits*.

In 1905 President Gompers stated in his annual report: "Though known to us, it is not generally understood that in our movement we accord fair and equal treatment to all wage-earners in any trade, craft or

[15] *Ibid.*

calling, and that membership is accorded in our unions to women upon an exact and equal and impartial footing with men. *Some of the unions, as an inducement for women to join them, make both the initiation and dues less than those required of men.* (Author's italics.) This is cited, not as an evidence of wisdom, for of this there is some doubt, for in unions we assert and stand for the principle of absolute equality of the sexes before trade union law and in trade union work, effectiveness and achievements." [16]

Special Dues and Benefits

The finances of a trade union are extremely important. Upon the size of the treasury depends the success of a projected strike, or the ease with which the union is capable of "carrying on" in times of industrial depression. The initiation fees and the monthly dues constitute the bulk of the finances of the union treas-
wages of the workers in these unions and the possibility of increasing the wages within the immediate future. It is the custom for the international union to establish the minimum dues and permit the local unions to raise them depending upon the wages which the workers receive in the local communities.

Women in industry receive a rate of wages generally lower than that of men. This differential in wages is accepted by the trade unions and incorporated in their
ury. Their amount is generally determined by the financial policies. Most unions with a female membership have adopted a policy of special initiation fees,

[16] *Proceedings A. F. of L. Convention,* 1905, p. 26.

dues, and benefits for their women members. Frequently this policy coincides with one prescribing lower dues and benefits for apprentices and learners in the industry, inasmuch as these positions are occupied for the most part by women and girls. It is difficult to make a thorough analysis of this policy of special dues. In most unions the policy may be traced to a desire to organise women and to make the dues low enough for them to be able to pay. The scheme has had the effect of muddling wage policies in many unions. Not only has the wage differential between men and women been perpetuated by the union wage agreement, but in many instances the union has naïvely explained the difference in wages by the fact that women's dues in the union were less than men's.

Some twelve international unions recorded special dues and initiation fees for their women members. No attempt was made to find out the number of local unions that had special dues and benefits for women members.

The policies of the unions with reference to the matter of special dues and benefits are by no means uniform. In the clothing industry, the United Cloth, Cap and Hat Makers' Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the International Ladies' Garment Workers make no discrimination between men and women members. The initiation fee and dues dependent upon the craft in which the workers are employed is the same for both sexes. In the United Garment Workers, however, and in the Journeyman Tailors' Union, this policy of special fees and dues is found.

Women workers belonging to the Journeyman Tailors' Union never become actual tailors. They are given the rank of "helpers" to the tailors. Their wages in this union are consequently much lower than those of men. An official of the union stated that only a limited number of women helpers are admitted. The union attempts to keep the proportion of one helper to six tailors because of the rapid decline in the demand for labour. Neither male nor female apprentices are entitled to sick or death benefits because of the lower initiation fee and dues.

A study of wage agreements of the United Garment Workers for a period of five years made by the writer indicates that in many of the locals of the union there has been a constant differential of three to four dollars between the wages of male and female helpers. In Duluth, Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland and a number of other cities, this differential between men's and women's wages is to be found.

The American Flint Glass Workers' Union admits women as apprentices only. Girls in the *glass* trade work mainly in the lamp department. They rarely get an opportunity, in fact it is considered extremely hazardous to work at the actual glass work. The women's work consists of a series of specialised processes requiring little actual training. Consequently, women have been admitted to the union as apprentices, receiving the same wages as journeymen. Their dues and initiation fee are lower than those of the full-fledged members. In this industry, therefore, women members are admitted on the same basis as the male

apprentices with the difference that women never may become full-fledged glass workers in a union shop.

The National Brotherhood of Pottery Operatives' Union states in its constitution that male and female members receiving the same compensation, pay the same initiation fee and dues. Where women workers receive less compensation than men their initiation fee and dues are one-half that of the men.

In the *food* industries, where the organisation of women is extremely weak, the difference in the wages of men and women is very great. There is a similar difference in the union dues.

The Bakery Workers' Union organised most of their women members in female auxiliaries, exempting them from assessments and eliminating them from beneficiary privileges. At the same time the Union accepted the fact that the women's wages were much lower than the men's, and installed the differential in dues and initiation fees. It is true that organised women in the Bakery Workers' Union are either cake packers or women employed in small bakeshops. Skilled women workers apparently are employed only in unorganised bakeries. An official of the union stated that even with the low dues required of women members it was almost impossible to organise them or to keep them, once they were organised. Their work is so different from that of the men, their wages are so much lower, that the Union has been loath to carry on any intensive campaign for the raising of wages or the development of organisation.

The Brewery Workers' Union, including workers in

the *soft drink* industry, have no special differential in dues and initiation fees for men and women entering the Union. Different crafts in the Union, however, have different dues. Women are generally limited to the operation of labelling machines, a lower paid occupation than those in which men are engaged. Actually, therefore, the dues for women are lower than those for men.

The Amalgamated Meat Cutters boasted of a large woman membership during the war, because of the official negotiations between the Union, the *meat packing* industry and the War Labour Board. In the meat packing industry women workers performed the same specialised tasks at which men were employed. They were admitted into the same locals with men, at the same rate of dues, except in the few special crafts which were always male in membership. The locals, however, were divided racially, because of the large foreign population in the industry. Slavs, Bohemians, Poles, Russians, Italians, each had their own local union, with neither craft nor sex alignment. Most of the women's work came with the development of special processes in the meat packing industry. Only in a few instances have women really taken over the work of men. This is true of the work in the "gut shanties" where cleaning guts or entrails of animals had been considered a man's job, because of the great difficulty of the work and because of the nauseating conditions under which the work had to be performed. With the invention of new machines and the decentralisation, as it were, of even the old processes, women

workers were put on the job and men were shifted to other tasks.

Wage increases during the war when the President of the United States and the Mediation Commission determined wages for the workers in the industry, were based upon the differences in occupations and the prevalent wages of men and women workers. The Commission actually attempted to secure "equal pay for equal work" during this period. In fact, one strike of meat workers in Mason City, Iowa, was settled by an arbitration clause "that the Company agrees to make inquiry as to how this question (of men's and women's wages) has been handled by other packing houses, so that the question of what is a man's work and what is a woman's work in the packing house can be settled. In the meantime the Company will hear any complaint of women workers as to the type of work they are performing or the wages they are receiving and attempt to adjust same."

A great deal of work in the meat packing industry to-day is carried on at a piece-rate basis. The basis of compensation for women workers is lower than that of men, though the difference is ostensibly made on the basis of the job and not the sex.

The Electrical Workers' Union has a situation which is unique in the question of dues, initiation fees, and benefits. Women workers in the electrical trade are comparative newcomers. During the war electrical supply manufacturing was one of the industries employing women for specialised work. Winding armature coils, for instance, was one occupation at

which women and girls were engaged. "The wire, as it is wound from a spool, is tensioned by being clamped between blocks, and then is wound about a shape by hand. After the required number of strands have been wound about the shape, they are hammered until they fit the shape perfectly. The girls cut the ends and remove and tie the shaped coils." [17] This, of course, was only one of a number of specialised processes at which women were employed. However, the constitution of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers declared that any union composed of male and female, or female electrical workers, should be classified and chartered as a Class B local union. This division carried with it an initiation fee and monthly dues that were less than those paid by Class A workers. The death benefit, consequently, was lower than that of Class A workers. What is even more important, all local unions, called Class B unions, came under the jurisdiction of shop electrical workers, which meant that the "basis of representation at the convention shall be one per capita tax vote for each female member and one delegate for every one hundred female members, or majority fraction thereof."

The majority of the women members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' Union are to be found in the telephone operators' department. The occupation is one which requires concentration, ability to stand monotonous work, and a psychologic quality of "meekness and ability to subordinate oneself." The history of the telephone industry states

[17] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 12, *loc. cit.*, p. 113.

that the first telephone operators in the United States were men, but that in the course of the development of the industry the men workers were neither as attentive to their work, as courteous, nor as easily "ordered around," as the women workers were. What became even more serious was the peculiar curiosity that men had to see how the "works went." They were found to be incorrigibly inquisitive and had to be replaced by women.

To-day the *telephone* industry is a "she-industry" because of the predominance of women workers. The dues and initiation fees of the telephone operators are lower than those of the electrical workers, and of course, the union benefits are reduced accordingly. The Boot and Shoe Workers' Union have the same initiation fees and dues for women as for men. The dues, according to the International constitution, cannot be less than 25 cents a week for both men and women, but women members are not entitled to sick benefit while pregnant, nor for five weeks after confinement. They would receive only one-half of their sick benefit should they be compelled to stop work during the period of menopause.

The constitution of the United Leather Workers declares that the monthly dues for apprentices and females shall be not less than 60 cents, where the dues for full membership are $1.15. Consequently, the strike benefits for apprentices and females are three dollars a week, contrasting with strike benefits for full members, which range from five to seven dollars. In the matter of benefits, apprentices and females re-

ceive one-half that granted to full members. The status of the woman worker in the Union is, therefore, the same as that of the apprentice.

The constitution of the Piano and Organ Workers' Union indicates that women doing polishing and mechanical work of a detailed nature pay one-half the initiation fee that men pay, one-half the weekly dues, one-half the regular assessments, and receive one-half the sick benefit except during the period of pregnancy or six weeks after confinement, when they receive no benefits at all.

In the Upholsterers' Union, the initiation fee for women workers is one-third less than that of the men, but equal to that of apprentices. The same differential exists in dues and in strike benefits. The greatest number of the women in the Upholsterers' Union are organised in separate locals.

In the United Wall Paper Crafts of America women have been admitted on a special constitutional provision. Just what conditions this constitutional provision sets down has not been ascertained. The Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers admit women to their union only on provision that they form separate women's auxiliaries and receive separate charters. Naturally, dues, initiation fees and benefits for these women's auxiliaries are less than those of the regular members. The Union claims only six women members at the present time, so that the women's auxiliaries have apparently outlived their usefulness.

The Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, the

International Brotherhood of Paper Makers, and the Photo Engravers' Union all have special dues and benefits for their women members because of the differences in wages and in jobs.

From an analysis of the policies of these unions the following observations can be made: The unions having lower initiation fees and dues for their women members justify their policy on the ground that the women receive lower wages than do the men. The lower dues are offered as a special inducement to join. Secondly, because of the lower dues, the union treasury cannot afford to pay full sick benefits or strike benefits to their women members. Thirdly, in several unions sick benefits are not given to women who are pregnant or in the period of menopause. (No mention is made of the type of illness which men must suffer in order to secure sick benefit.) Fourthly, a number of unions have adjusted their dues to the wages of workers in a particular craft, regardless of the sex of the workers. In most of these instances, however, the women are employed in the low-paid crafts exclusively. Theoretically, special dues are craft dues, measured by the wages received in the craft; practically, they are "women's dues."

The question of special dues is reflected in the wage agreements of the various unions. Invariably, the unions having special dues also accept the prevailing wage differential between men's and women's wages, and do not attempt to realise "equal pay for equal work."

CHAPTER IV

CAN WOMEN WORKERS BE ORGANISED?

We are aware of the low economic status of working women in our industrial society. The union is the workers' most important weapon for improving that economic status. On the other hand, we are aware of prevailing antagonistic policies of many trade unions toward the unskilled, particularly women, workers. Can women workers be organised these handicaps notwithstanding?

Successful organisation of workers in the past has depended upon at least four salient facts: a permanent wage-earning group; skilled occupation; a strategic position for the worker in the industry and of the industry in the entire scheme of industries; and special organisation tactics for the workers in different industries.

For many reasons some economic, some temperamental, women workers, as a group in our labour supply, have been thought to be lacking in these factors of organisability.

Permanency of the Wage-Earning Group

A permanent union depends upon a permanent wage-earning group. Ephemeral trade unions marked the

early days of American industry. Workers would become dissatisfied with their wages or irritated with their employer and would walk out of the shop. An organisation would be formed, but as soon as the grievance disappeared the mushroom union ceased to exist.

Industrial America in the early part of the nineteenth century was in its infancy. A class of permanent labourers had not yet evolved. The country was rich in opportunities, and the journeyman carpenter or tailor had every chance to become a master-employer. The frontiers of industry, like the frontiers of the country, were open to adventurous workmen. The entire period from 1800 to 1850 was marked by a constant transition of wage-earners into merchants, petty business men, and farmers.

With the complex growth and development of American industry, and the more or less permanent stratification of industrial classes, wage-earners became a permanent group. It is true, the psychology of "go-getting" or "from log cabin to White House" still grips the minds of the workers to-day. It will continue to do so as long as there is the glorification of the "fellow who rose." The need of a permanent wage-earning class for the demands of modern industry necessitated also the establishment of the trade union as an instrument of protection for that class. The American worker, of course, still differs from the European worker in his appraisal of himself, for he is still steeped in the philosophy of "getting ahead." But the opportunities for so doing are becoming lim-

ited, and as the chances grow less, the trade union becomes a stronger and a more permanent institution.

This permanency of the group is an integral factor in the organisability of workers. Women in industry have not been permanent. Their temporary character has been closely interwoven with the lives of working women. Marriage, child-bearing, blind alley jobs, low wages—all contributed their share to the creation of this attitude.

The annual labour turnover in industry has never been measured, but there is a common impression that it is much greater among women than among men. Though this cannot be taken as a proof of the impermanency of women wage-earners, it is undoubtedly indicative of the trend.

In a large silk factory employing over 4,000 workers, of whom 1,535 were women, the latter were responsible for 49 per cent of the annual turnover. "Roughly, one male in four leaves each year, while almost two out of five females leave." [1] Another study of the length of the time women remained in industry was reported in the study of women workers in Manchester, New Hampshire, by the Women's Bureau.[2] It was found that a larger percentage of single men (22.7 per cent), than single women (18.3 per cent), had worked ten years or more in one occupation, and that 5.6 per cent of the women as against 8.4 per cent of the men worked fifteen years and over. It was

[1] "Monthly Labor Review," May, 1924.
[2] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 30, *loc. cit.*, p. 52.

extremely difficult to secure this information for the married women workers.

In one of the largest locals of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union having a membership that fluctuates between 25,000 and 30,000, of whom 77 per cent were women, there was almost a complete turnover of membership every five years.[3] This would indicate that the longest industrial life of women garment workers in this local was five years. However, union officials testify that increasing numbers of women return to the trade after they have left it for marriage or for some other occupation.

The woman worker to-day is in a similar position to that of her brother a century or so ago. As an individual worker, she is but a passing member of the labour force. As a member of a group making up the labour supply of the nation she has come to stay.

Since women bear children, their industrial life will always be interrupted. On the other hand, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, the number of women entering industry in the last decade is steadily increasing and the age limits, within which they are to be found, are greater.

In the matter of permanency in industry, therefore, there are two factors to be considered. Women workers as a group are a permanent part of the nation's labour supply. As individuals, they are subject to a more or less broken industrial life. The psychology of impermanence which women workers have is a definite influence upon their economic status. Both

[3] Julius Hochman, "Justice," August 23, 1924.

the psychology and the economic status are factors to be considered in any discussion of permanent trade union organisation. It was not until the workingmen of the 80's began to consider themselves a permanent class of workers that any sort of permanent trade union movement among them could develop. Women workers will undoubtedly be compelled to recognise the permanence of their group before effective organisation can be carried on.

Nature of the Occupation

The American trade union is primarily dependent upon the skilled craftsman. The skilled worker has become the core of the trade union structure. A survey of the industries which are organised indicates that the strongest and oldest unions are those highly skilled craft unions in the building trades, the railroad industry and the printing industry. Leo Wolman, in his study of the growth of trade unions, indicates that the emergencies of the war period from 1915 to 1920 made possible extensive unionism among semi-skilled and unskilled industries—the textile, packing and slaughter house, metal trades, seamen's and longshoremen's unions.[4] But the industrial depression from 1920 to 1923 marked a decided falling off and even disintegration of the "war-baby" unions in these semi-skilled and unskilled trades. The craft unions just about held their own during this depression.

Women workers are concentrated in the so-called

[4] Leo Wolman, *Growth of Trade Unionism,* 1880-1923, pp. 29-66.

semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. More than 60 per cent of the women gainfully employed in 1920 were in trade, professional service, domestic and personal service and clerical occupations. These occupations are predominantly women-employing, for only about 25 per cent of the male working population are engaged in these trades.[5] The extent of organisation in these trades is almost negligible. The men engaged in these industries are unorganised or very poorly so. Since 1920 the loss of membership has been quite complete. It is natural that the unions to be hardest hit in a business depression should be those which are on the fringe as far as permanence or stability is concerned.

The job of organising unskilled workers into craft unions is like fitting a round peg into a square hole. For the most part women constitute the unskilled workers. It seems impossible for a craft organisation to serve at the same time the interests of the skilled craftsman and the unskilled worker.

In the questionnaire sent out to the trade unions affiliated with the A. F. of L. it was found that of those unions admitting women workers, twenty-six claimed that their women members worked only at skilled trades. Eleven declared that their women workers were both skilled and unskilled workers, and the remainder that their women members were unskilled, admitted only in separate locals. A number of the other unions also have separate women's locals.

The meat packing industry is an excellent example

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

of an industry employing predominantly unskilled workers. According to the census of 1920 it employed 12,227 women, of whom two-thirds were listed as semi-skilled operatives working in the slaughter and packing houses. The unskilled workers were to be found in the manufacturing and mechanical end of the industry. In 1920 the Amalgamated Meat Cutters' and Butchers' Union claimed 5,200 women members, or 42 per cent of all the women in the industry. In 1924 the union had lost its women membership and claimed only a little more than 100 women members. The union officials were discouraged, and declared that not only was it impossible to organise women, but even unskilled men could not be organised. The union had eliminated its craft basis and was willing to organise every worker in the meat packing industry regardless of skill or training!

This policy of organising all the workers in the industry developed after years of bitter experience with the craft structure. From 1897 to 1902 the Amalgamated Meat Cutters' and Butchers' Union was organised around the skilled worker. In 1902 the union was thrown open to the less skilled workers. In 1910 women workers, mostly immigrant, began to enter the industry. After the famous organisation campaign of 1917, in which twelve national unions combined, the industry was organised into separate locals based upon nationality, sex or colour. The women workers, as well as all the unskilled workers, were admitted into the union at a very low initiation fee. The business depression plus disagreement among the officials of the

co-operating unions, shot the entire organisation to pieces.

In the needle trades' unions, where more women are organised than in any other occupation, the industrial type of union predominates. The craft is still the basis of the local union, but all the local unions of a city are governed by the policies of a joint board made up of delegates from local craft unions. The growing tendency seems to be for an amalgamation of craft locals, with one local for the entire industry. The position of the woman member, regardless of her skill, is therefore assured in the union.

The textile industry, employing 471,466 women workers, 438,363 of whom are classified as semi-skilled, had about 11.5 per cent of them organised in 1920 in a form of an industrial union—the Amalgamated Textile Workers' Union and a craft union—the United Textile Workers' Union. In the four years following, the Amalgamated Textile Workers' Union disintegrated after a series of disastrous strikes. In whatever industries women are more or less successfully organised, it is interesting to note that the craft structure of the union was not adhered to.

There are a number of tendencies to be observed in a discussion of the nature of women's occupations as a factor in organisation. The first is the difficulty and practical impossibility of organising unskilled workers in craft unions. The second is the fact that, in those industries where women are in preponderance or a menacing competitive factor, the unions find themselves compelled to adjust their structure and

philosophy in order to organise them. In those industries where women are still newcomers, the existing unions can still afford to, and do ignore them.

Strategic Economic Position

The strategic position of the industry in the economic scheme of things and the strategic position of the worker in the industry, influence the facility of organisation. It is a well-known fact that many of the basic industries and large public utilities are weak in trade union organisation. It is also true, however, that the strongest unions are to be found in industries playing a strategic part in the economic scheme of things. The miners' union, the railroad union and the building trades unions are to be found in industries where a strike or series of strikes is likely to effect a paralysis of the activities of the country.

Women workers are not generally employed in these basic industries, though they are to be found in public utilities. They have not the advantage, therefore, of another of the qualifications for craft organisation: employment in a strategic industry.

The American labour movement has been built upon a pyramid of skilled workers, holding more or less strategic positions in their respective industries. It has been a common experience in organisation that if the "key" jobs of a trade are organised, the union can hold the rest of the trade. Upon the strength and attitude of its Cutters' Local depended the success of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union's

strike. If the cutters in the garment industry went on working, the strike of the operators and finishers would be threatened, for the work could easily be sent out of town to be manufactured once the garments were cut. Similarly, if the compositors and linotypers went on working in the printing factory, the successful strike of the bookbinders would be threatened because workers would be secured to take their places. The economic status of the craftsman depends, therefore, upon the unionisation of the craftsmen holding the "key" positions in the industry.

But women workers do not usually hold the "key" positions. Those positions are the highest paid and usually the most skilled, often requiring long apprenticeship. Even in the so-called women's trades, where women are employed exclusively, the "key" jobs are filled by men. In domestic or clerical service, where the largest number of women are employed, the peculiar isolation of the work-place and the worker makes any possibility of unionisation along craft lines quite remote. Thus we find that the two other essentials for craft organisation, strategic position of the industry in the scheme of industries, and strategic position within the industry, are lacking in the qualifications of women workers.

It may be considered presumptuous to suggest that industry shall change its habits, slough off traditions concerning jobs, and distribute them among workers regardless of sex—in order that women may be organised into trade unions. It seems easier to point out that the union—the more flexible instrument and pri-

marily a functional organ purporting to serve the interests of *all* workers—must change its form. The union, if it would organise unskilled workers, either women or men, must adopt a structure which does not emphasise skill and crafts but admits every worker in the industry. It must at least adjust the form of its organisation to the industry to be organised. The structures of individual industries have changed tremendously in the last twenty-five years with the changing technique of production and the increased specialisation. Within many industries there has been a complete elimination of the craftsman. The union will be compelled to recognise this change and, whereas it may be strategic for the Locomotive Engineers to adhere to the craft union structure because there are still skilled engineers, it is a moot question whether the textile workers, or the boot and shoe workers, or the slaughter-house workers can cling to this type of organisation in the face of changing industry.

Tactics of Organisation

The fourth factor in organisation is the method of getting workers into the union. Every worker entering industry is brought face to face with two sets of economic problems. One is inherent in the economic system that is motivated by profit-making ideals. The other set of problems is indigenous to the particular industry in which the worker gets a job.

The problems arising out of the economic system are rooted in competition, not only between workers for

jobs, but between sexes, races and creeds. Answer a "help wanted" advertisement some morning. Hundreds of workers stand in line for hours. The questions put to the prospective employé vary with the policy of the employers. They are sure to include: "Jew or Gentile? Protestant or Catholic? Young or Old? Colored or White?" and a preference for male or female. All of this, to be sure, before the job is described or the wages quoted.

They are the problems arising out of an economic system that does not provide adequate training for work, and does not satisfy the creative instinct of the individual. When a miner was asked why he objected to the machinery in the mines, he replied: "Because it's nothing but a *God-damn* coal-factory. It's a coal factory—that's what it is." [6] Another miner cryptically added: "You got to have strong backs and weak minds to work in the mines these days." They are the problems of wages, which never in the history of our industrial development have reached the level of the minimum cost of living. They are the problems of long working hours and bad working conditions. They are the problems of inequitable distribution of wealth, of business depressions, and cyclic and seasonal periods of unemployment.

The second set of problems is peculiar to the particular industry in which the worker finds himself. Every industry demands a degree of specific training to fill its jobs. Different industries offer varying opportunities for advancement. Practically every indus-

[6] Carter Goodrich, *The Miners' Freedom,* p. 155.

try develops problems of maladjustment of workers to jobs and workers to workers. Wages are paid in each industry in terms of custom, tradition and the invisible "market" rather than in terms of needs and capabilities. Mr. Dooley put it succinctly: "Wan iv th' sthrangest things about life is that th' poor who need the money the most ar-re th' very wans that niver have it."

The organiser for a union is generally concerned with the second set of problems. He may have "ideas" and even a philosophy about the economic system. He is, however, primarily concerned with organising workers into unions which will have the strength to change or control the problems affecting the workers in the particular industry. The actual technique of organisation should vary and often does vary from industry to industry in so far as the problems differ. On the other hand, every plan of organisation has a number of common factors. It must consider the certain opposition of employers, the general business situation, the disposition of the public and the psychology of the workers.

Bearing these factors in mind, what have been the organisation policies of the unions for women workers? Has there been a consciousness of the special problems of the woman worker, and an attempt to meet these problems in organisation campaigns? The policy of organisation should not only vary with different industries but should indicate an understanding of the economic and psychologic status of women workers. Does it?

When, in 1834, the cotton mill operative of a Lowell factory waved her poke-bonnet and signalled her fellow workers to follow her out on strike, two thousand women marched out through the town. Speeches were made, proclamations delivered, committees were appointed, and the trappings of a modern union organisation campaign were created. Similarly, when the Dover girls, four hundred of them, went out on strike, fired gunpowder on the village common and speechified about "liberty for the daughters of the American Revolution," the factories advertised for "better behaved" girls. A Philadelphia paper of that day declared that "The late strike and grand public march of the female operatives exhibit the Yankee sex in a new and unexpected light. By and by the governor may have to call out the militia to prevent a gynecocracy." [7]

The factory owners consciously fostered the idea that the operatives were "bad" women. Their advertisements carried special pleas for "respectable young women." In fact, so prevalent did this idea become that the girls themselves issued a statement. "We do not estimate our liberty by dollars and cents—consequently it was not the reduction of wages alone, which caused the excitement, but that haughty, overbearing disposition, that purse-proud insolence, which was becoming more and more apparent. We beseech them not to asperse our characters or stigmatise us as disorderly persons."

These incidents marked the first American appear-

[7] Andrews and Bliss, *loc. cit.*, p. 23.

ance of a now common vulnerable point of attack against union organisation among women. One hundred years later the women barbers, attempting to enter the Journeyman Barbers' Union, were described as immoral and scabs by union men.[8] Striking women garment workers in Chicago in 1924 were arrested and sent to jail after being called "low women, a disgrace to their sex."

The similarity of the prejudices a hundred years ago and to-day toward protesting women workers indicates that every plan of organisation must of necessity consider these traditional sex-factors. They are sure to be exploited not only by the employers, the press and the general public, but even by the organised men workers. Furthermore, women are generally not class conscious, and, since they do not derive immediate economic profit from forming a union or joining one, the appeal which is made to them to organise must include social as well as economic inducements.

A detailed survey of unions having women workers in their industries shows that few unions have ever made any special organisation plans which include these prerequisites. The A. F. of L. has employed thirty-eight women organisers in its entire history, as against hundreds of male organisers. Eight national unions in 1924 employed women organisers. Thirty unions declared they used their men organisers, except when some special drive was being made. They then hired extra women organisers.

[8] *Proceedings Journeyman Barbers' International Union Convention,* 1924, pp. 149-175.

The usual organisation campaign centres about some strike or general dissatisfaction with working conditions. In industrial cities, where women workers attempted to organise of their own accord, they usually appealed to the central labour body, or to the Women's Trade Union League, if there was one in that town, to help them. Occasionally, a woman organiser of the A. F. of L. has been sent to a town to help in the organisation work. For the most part, however, except in those industries where women threaten the positions of the men, there has been no trade union group that has considered itself responsible for the organisation of women. The National Women's Trade Union League valiantly fought a lone hand in the past. But, lacking funds, and the whole-hearted co-operation of the labour movement, they have been able to do little actual organisation work in their ten or fifteen years of existence.

At this point it is of interest to study the organisation policies of the different unions. It is impossible to list all the methods and tactics used in an organisation campaign, though many of these will be discussed in the next chapter. There are the personal appeal and the mass appeal. These two methods involve organisational and educational work. On the other hand, women are frequently automatically organised, where the organised men in the industry have been able to effect a closed-shop agreement. In these instances the real effort expended in actual organisational work among the women is indeed a negligible factor.

Organisation Policies and Extent of Organisation Among Women

It will be noted in the following comparison of the organisation policies of the unions and the extent of organisation among women workers, that where there is a defined policy there is a better showing in the number of women organised than in those unions where there is not.

In the leather goods industry, employing 9,651 women over ten years of age, classified as semi-skilled operatives and labourers, the United Leather Goods Workers' Union claimed an organised membership, in 1920, of 2,900 members. In 1924 the women membership of the union dropped to about fifty. Women workers of this union were concentrated in the glazed kid industry, in Wilmington, Delaware, and Philadelphia, and Camden, New Jersey. A large proportion of these women were organised during the war as a result of closed-shop agreements, but the business depression of 1921 made it impossible for the union to hold them. One woman on the Executive Council was the only woman organiser for the district. The finances of the union suffered tremendously as a result of the loss of membership and the union has been unable to foster any campaign for organisation since that time. A circular letter sent out from the president's office in Kansas City, in 1924, urged a drive for new members. It suggested that the membership of each local be divided into committees of two. These com-

mittees were to visit non-members in their homes or in their workshop, and urge them to become members of the union. The letter ended with an appeal to "keep revolving the names of 'Hard Nuts to Crack'; give them no peace until you get the application." But a circular letter does not constitute an organisation campaign.

In the Fancy Leather Goods Workers' Union and the Travellers' Goods Union there was a similar loss in women membership. The predominance of membership in the latter union was foreign-born. Neither of these unions developed any special policy of organising the women workers, or keeping them after they were organised.

The Piano and Organ Workers' Union and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners have jurisdiction over industries employing 32,265 women workers, semi-skilled and unskilled. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners does not admit women into their union because women are the unskilled workers in the lumber and furniture factories. The Piano and Organ Workers' Union admit that women workers are increasing in numbers in their industry but claimed only fifteen members in 1924. Their constitution demands an apprenticeship of three years in the trade and an age limit of 18 years in both these industries. There are 1,426 girls from ten to fifteen years of age employed. No special effort is made on the part of the Piano and Organ Workers' Union to reach the increasing number of women workers in their industry. No attempt is made to encourage the

women members in the union to participate in union activity.

In the clay, glass and stone industries, employing 17,586 women, of whom 11,089 are over fifteen years of age, five unions have jurisdiction. The Glass Bottle Blowers' Union claimed a membership of 250 women in 1924. "During the war we took them nearly all in but they showed no interest in spite of our best efforts and they gradually dropped out," reads a letter from an official of the union. This industry is faced with an extension of machine process and an increasing number of women workers. The union has in no way changed its policy and tactics of organisation to meet the influx of women. The "best efforts" of keeping the women in the union consisted of sending men organisers to the meetings of the locals and urging the women to "carry on." The American Flint Glass Workers' Union claimed a membership of thirty women, skilled workers, in 1924. The National Brotherhood of Operative Potters, recognising that the number of women in their trade was increasing, made a definite effort to organise them. One women's local was formed so that the women would learn to manage their own affairs. From time to time a woman organiser has been employed and special organisation campaigns among women initiated. In 1920 the union reported 1,500 organised women pottery operatives. In 1924 it claimed about 500 women members.

The United Brick and Clay Workers' Union, in a pessimistic letter explained their loss of women members as follows: "A few years ago we organised two

locals of stoneware workers, one of three hundred, and the other of 1,200 women. We employed two women organisers, and after about a year of struggle and an expense of $20,000, we lost! We have not attempted to organise them since, so we have not a woman member in our organisation. . . ."

These women were considered skilled workers, had been organised, but were lost to the union after a disastrous strike. No efforts to reorganise them have since been made.

The iron and steel industries, according to the 1920 census, employ 72,218 women workers, semi-skilled and unskilled. Three unions, having jurisdiction in these industries, have attempted to organise the women. The International Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, finding that women were employed in the tin plate works during the war, organised them in so-called Tin House Locals. Most of the women were foreign-born, receiving a lower hourly rate than the men working at the same task. The difficulty of keeping them organised was enhanced by the feeling of the officials of the union that the industry was not suitable for women, and that they had come in only as emergency war workers.

The International Brotherhood of Foundry Employés claimed about fifteen women members, doing unskilled work in the enamelling department of a large stove company with whom the union made a closed-shop agreement.

The International Association of Machinists, also having supervision in these industries, underwent the

typical union experiences in organising women and keeping them in the unions after they were organised. During the war there were some 15,000 women members of the Machinists' Union. It was not necessary to do actual organisation work among them because the contract arrangements with the government were based on closed-shop union agreements. Most of these women were employed in munition factories, working at specialised processes. After the war, with the cessation of work, the women members dropped out of the industry and incidentally the union. Practically no effort was made to keep those women who remained in the industry, in the union. In 1924 there were approximately one hundred women machinists organised in a woman's local in Brooklyn—all that remained of 15,000 women members some five years previous. A similar slump occurred in the male membership of the union following the war.

The spirit of the craftsman toward the unskilled woman worker was revealed in an interview with an official of the International Association of Machinists. "There are few real women machinists. A machinist is born and not made. One must have a feeling for machines and women haven't got that. The woman worker comes in to do specialist's work—a task which has never been done even by the skilled machinist." The fact that the specialised process is now an integral part of machine production, and that the woman worker is filling the job of the specialised worker, has seemingly not influenced the organising policy of the union.

Three unions, the Bakery and Confectionery Workers, the Brewery Workers, and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butchers' Workmen have jurisdiction in the food industries employing some 59,573 women over fifteen years of age. In 1920, 5.6 per cent of this number of women were organised.[9] In 1924, the total number of women organised did not exceed 1,000. The Bakery and Confectionery Workers claimed about 400 women members, organised in separate women's locals. The story of the baking industry is that of another industry going through the transitional process from skilled to specialised production. The proverbial German bakery on the corner, pouring forth enticing odours of freshly baked cakes and breads, is giving way to large baking establishments where breads are made, "untouched by human hands." The Bakery Workers' Union attempted to organise the girls coming into the industry recently, but failed. The union became discouraged, and to-day considers the job of organising women entirely too costly. The history of the union is dotted with efforts to organise the girls working in candy factories. Here again, they have failed. The girls working in candy factories are young, subject to great labour turnover, and do not respond to the union's message or methods of organisation.

At present the Bakery Workers' Union is spending its energy in adjusting itself to the elimination of the master-baker. He was formerly the pivot-point of the industry, but the substitution of a process of manu-

[9] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 12, *loc. cit.*, p. 154.

facture, which enables the man in the office to hold the recipes, and the machines attended by unskilled workmen to do the rest, has changed his position and weakened the union.

The United Brewery, Flour, Cereal and Soft Drink Workers claimed a membership of 400 women in 1924, organised in the same locals as the men. The number of women in the industry is increasing, but the union has developed no policy of reaching the women not yet organised.

The story of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butchers' Workmen has been described in an earlier paragraph. A union having about 5,200 women in 1920 has a mere handful to-day. Actual attempts at intensive organisation to regain the lost membership have not yet been made.

In the metal industries, which employ some 70,395 women, the Diamond Workers' Union, the Electrical Workers' Union, the Jewelry Workers, the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers and the Metal Polishers' Union have jurisdiction. In 1924 it was estimated that the Diamond Workers' Union had about six women members, skilled workers. The union reports that the number of women in this particular trade is decreasing, and for that reason no organising policy has been developed.

The Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers claim a female membership of 100, performing unskilled work in the manufacture of kitchen utensils. These women are organised in the same locals as the men, and pay a lower per capita tax to the international union than do

the men. This union also reports that the number of women are decreasing in the industry, and thus accounts for the lack of an organised policy.

The Metal Polishers' Union claimed no more than twenty-three women members in 1924, all organised in one factory and in one local in New England. Here again the union reported a decrease in the number of women in the industry. During the war, of course, a large number of women were employed at polishing metals. The War Labour Board ruled that women shall receive equal pay for equal work, but that tasks shall not be allotted disproportionate to their strength. This last clause has been the basis of a differential in rates of wages for men and women workers in union negotiations. On the whole, the union has not been concerned with the few women workers in the trade. There were about 1,900 in the trade in 1920, and the number has been said to be decreasing.

The Secretary of the Metal Trades Department of the A. F. of L. declared that the women came into the industry in large numbers during the war, but the Metal Trades Department never developed any organisation policy for them. It was a job left for the international unions.

The general secretary of the Metal Polishers' Union, in a letter to the Women's Bureau,[10] declared that the industrial hazards of the trade, which resulted in pulmonary tuberculosis, was one of the reasons the union "discouraged women as much as possible from entering this dangerous trade, but whenever the manufacturer

[10] *Ibid.*

insists on hiring women, we do not insist on this objection, but do demand, however, that they shall receive the same rate of wages for an equal amount of work performed, as the men receive."

There are about 209,515 women engaged in the electrical industry. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers claimed 12,000 women members in 1920. This number included the telephone operators, organised in the Telephone Operators' Department. About 600 of these women are workers in electrical shops doing skilled and semi-skilled work. These women are organised in special locals, known as Class B locals for workers in shops and factories. During the war, the women came into the unions under the government contract agreements. Some money was spent by the international and local unions to keep their organisations going, but in the last few years it was felt that efforts expended in organising the semi-skilled operatives were futile. The secretary of the union stated in an interview, "If they want to come in, we will be glad to accept them, but we won't go out of our way to try to organise them."

The Telephone Operators' Department of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers was organised in 1918 after a series of struggles on the part of local operators' unions to secure a vote and a standing in the International Union. From 1912 to 1918, about one hundred locals of telephone operators had been chartered by the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. When the proposed amendment to establish a separate department for the telephone operators was adopted,

it was felt by the telephone operators' locals, that this was an attempt to place them outside the International Union and deprive them of the power of participating in conventions or referendums, while their charters still required them to submit to union laws.

Telephone operators are subject to peculiar conditions. They are young (there are 2,910 of them under 15 years of age according to the 1920 census). They are ephemeral (practically 50 per cent of the operators do not remain at their jobs longer than 2 years).[11] Their wages are low, and their work is nerve-racking and fatiguing. On the other hand, the work is clean, and has been surrounded with a reputation of gentility and refinement. The policy of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company is to give preference to girls who live at home, who are American, and who are "respectable." The industry is a public utility and organisation of the girls has been tenaciously and persistently opposed by the telephone company.

The 1921 convention of the Telephone Operators' Department featured the plans of organisation as the most important matter under consideration. A plan for regional organisation was adopted. Regional councils, covering the eight regional divisions of the Bell Telephone Company in the United States and two in the Dominion of Canada, were appointed. Organisers were to be assigned to each regional territory and the Regional Council made up of representatives from each district was to be the administrative body of the territory. Organisation work was to be carried on in new

[11] "Survey," vol. lxiv, 1920, p. 367.

and unorganised fields as well as in fields having an organisation nucleus.

The telephone operators of New England were exceedingly well organised in 1919, but the disastrous strike of 1921 resulted not only in the complete blacklisting of union members, but also in a more determined anti-union policy on the part of the telephone company. The union to-day has one organiser in the New England territory, where there are few locals left. The largest membership of the union is concentrated in the Middle West and West.

The story of the organisation of telephone operators is indeed a brave one. With little money, and little cooperation from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' Union or even local unions, the Department developed a most intelligent plan of organisation and was successfully carrying it out, when the great strike and the business depression put the work at a standstill.

In the paper and pulp industries, some 39,569 women were employed in 1920. The International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers claimed about 500 women members in 1924, performing semi-skilled work. The constitution of this union makes special reference to the necessity of "bettering the condition of the female members of the various locals." The International Brotherhood of Paper Makers also claim about 500 women members. Both of these unions also lost membership and strength in the period of business depression. Though these unions had an active organisational policy, previous to the depression,

little is being done at present in the way of special organisation work among women. The United Wall Paper Crafts of North America do not admit women members into their union without special constitutional provision.

In the field of transportation, though the census indicates that there are women seamen, street railway employés, teamsters and chauffeurs, the unions have made no effort to organise them because of their small proportion.

The Commercial Telegraphers' Union and the Order of Railroad Telegraphers have jurisdiction over a field employing 16,860 women telegraphers. The Commercial Telegraphers claimed 390 women members in 1924 and the Railroad Telegraphers claimed 2,000. With the introduction of the automatic telegraph device, which operates on the same principle as the typewriter, the number of women telegraphers has increased twofold in the field of commercial telegraphy, but the union itself has developed no policy of organisation. It has been assumed that the same difficulties of organisation prevail in this occupation as among the typists and stenographers—the problems of youth, isolation of work-place, etc.

The Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employés having jurisdiction over all street and electric railway employés, employing 3,002 women, of whom 2,261 are ticket and station agents, has organised about 1,000 women. This comparatively high proportion of organisation is due to the fact that the union, in making an agreement with a street railway

company, automatically unionises all workers on the road. In Chicago, for instance, the local of the Street Railway Union has an agreement with the company, in which every ticket agent employed must become a member of the union. According to the secretary of the local the jobs of ticket agents have become almost unavailable to outsiders because the women stay on for years. When there is a vacancy, the relatives or friends of union men or of the Company officials get the jobs. The wage differential between men and women ticket agents is about four dollars, according to union agreement. This differential is explained on the ground that women agents never work on the night shift.

During the war, when women were being used as conductors, replacing men, the union bitterly opposed the substitution, refused to admit them into the union, and in Detroit actually went out on strike against them. Women's work in this industry to-day is limited to that of ticket agent, car washer or cleaner. Other than this positive policy of exclusion from a particular craft, the union has no particular policy of union organisation among women, though in Chicago it upholds the stand of the Company in opposing the employment of married women as ticket agents.

In trade, there is practically no organisation whatever among clerks and salespeople in stores. Of some 556,671 women employed as saleswomen, clerks in stores, floorwalkers and demonstrators, of whom 12,662 are girls under 15 years of age, the Retail Clerks' Union claim about 2,000 organised women. The union itself is not well organised centrally, and the policy of

organisation is dependent mainly upon local personalities.

Since few women are employed in the building trades, the unions concerned have naturally developed no organisational policy.

It is to be emphasised once more that in all the foregoing unions, the percentage of women organised is very small in proportion to the number of women employed in the industries. It is also to be noted that practically no organisation policies to reach the unskilled woman worker have been developed in most of these unions.

Let us consider the other side of the picture—the industries having a goodly proportion of organised women.

The largest group of organised women is to be found in the needle industries.

It has been estimated that practically 46 per cent of the women and 76.6 per cent of the men employed in the clothing industries are organised. The actual number organised of both sexes is about the same—177,100 men and 169,400 women. The clothing industries, however, are predominantly women-employing—368,508 women as against 231,349 men—and even in these industries the proportion of women organised seems to be less than that of men.

If the important clothing markets such as New York, Chicago, Cleveland, and Baltimore were considered, the percentage of organised women workers might compare more favourably with that of men. As it is, the figures of comparison include the women employed in

small towns manufacturing garments for local consumption.

The International Ladies' Garment Workers Union claimed in 1924 a membership of 46,435 men and 34,125 women. Out of 73,000 members investigated, 52.5 per cent were male and 38.7 per cent female. The industry concentrates largely in New York City. The membership is predominantly foreign, 63.8 per cent Jews of foreign birth, 19.3 per cent Italians of foreign birth and 2.9 per cent native born. Two-thirds of the membership are between the ages of 21 and 41.[12]

The problems of organisation among these women are fully as difficult as in other industries. The union has succeeded in organising so large a proportion of the women because of a peculiar combination of practical and persistent organisation policies and idealism. The industry is so predominantly female that union officials have recognised the importance of eternally and continuously organising their women workers. A system of women organisers, foreign language-speaking organisers, social activities, organisation campaigns and mass meetings has been developed for organisation purposes. The message of unionism is being carried to all workers constantly, year in, year out, despite failures and difficulties. A more detailed description of methods and tactics used by this union will be given in the following chapter. At this point it is important to note that the success of the union depended upon a distinct and persistent organisation policy.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union claimed in 1920 a membership of 66,100 women and 101,100

[12] Louis Levine, *Women Garment Workers,* p. 431.

men. In 1924 the total membership was approximately 125,000, of whom 42 per cent were women. In this union a distinct organisation policy has been formulated —women organisers, a Women's Bureau which was created primarily to further the organisation work among women.

The Cloth Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers' Union and the United Hatters of North America have jurisdiction over an industry employing some 82,402 women workers. The United Hatters claimed some 2,000 women workers in 1920 and about 1,476 women in 1924. The Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' Union claim about 2,000 women members. The United Hatters have developed a policy of organising its women membership into separate locals. The constitution of the United Hatters specified the occupations at which women may be employed. "Women shall make all women's headgear. Straw operating all ladies' hats made of materials all straw, sewing, wiring, binding, lining, wire frame making, French edging and all hand sewing." (Constitution, 1920.) [13]

The International Glove Workers' Union has jurisdiction over an industry employing about 16,773 women. Two-thirds of the membership of the union of about 500 members are women. The organisation has no special policy of organisation to-day, though several years ago the union had women organisers in the field and carried on a persistent organisation cam-

[13] In 1924, the United Hatters relinquished their jurisdiction over millinery workers to the Cloth Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers' Union.

paign. The industrial depression and a number of serious strikes during the last few years weakened its strength. This union is at present officered by women members.

The United Garment Workers with a female membership of 31,000, in 1920, and about 29,560 in 1924, carry on a steady organisation campaign among all their workers. Since 60 per cent of their membership are women and the number of women in the industry seems to be increasing, the union has adopted a special organisation policy among women.

The Journeyman Tailors' Union claimed a membership of 2,035 women in 1924, employed as helpers to custom tailors. There are altogether 31,828 women in the trade. No figures are available for cleaners and dyers who come under the union jurisdiction. In an interview with an official of the Union, it was learned that the union had no aggressive policy for organising women because it would not admit more than the proportion of 2,000 women to 12,000 custom tailors. These women are always admitted as helpers and apprentices, never as custom tailors. Women organisers have never been employed by the national organisation, although occasionally local unions have done so. When questioned as to the possibility of the women helpers becoming custom tailors, the official of the union stated that the work was too difficult for women, for one thing, and that they could not become members of the union as custom tailors because of constitutional prohibition.

The International Fur Workers' Union claimed a

membership of 3,000 women in 1924. The women do both skilled and unskilled work and are organised in separate as well as mixed locals. There has been no special organising policy for the women workers, but a determined effort has been made to keep the membership of the women on the same basis as that of the men.

The next largest group of organised women in manufacturing industries is to be found in the printing and publishing industry employing some 70,855 women. The International Brotherhood of Bookbinders claimed a membership of 5,500 women in 1924 (8,400 in 1920). A number of women organisers are employed, organisation is in separate locals, and they manage their own affairs for the most part. It has been a firm policy of the union to organise the women. Women officers and secretaries of locals are responsible for special organisation campaigns.

The International Typographical Union claimed a woman membership of 2 per cent of their total—2,000 women, performing both skilled and unskilled work. The 1920 census indicates that 11,306 women are employed in the industry. In the days of the Knights of Labour, the printers fought the admission of women into the industry. They were called "rats," and for a printing establishment to be "ratted" upon, was as bad as being "scabbed." However, the Typographical Union to-day has a definite policy of organisation among women, though the requirements of a long apprenticeship period eliminate the unskilled worker. In the Photo Engravers' Union there are just two women

members. There are some 1,000 women members of the Printing Pressmen's Union.

The textile industry, employing some 471,466 women workers, had about 11.5 per cent, or about 54,000 of them organised in 1920. In 1924, the United Textile Workers' Union claimed about 20,000 women members. The Amalgamated Textile Workers' Union which claimed some 15,000 women in 1920, has since then completely disbanded. It is impossible to estimate the number of organised women in independent local unions which are scattered about the country. The Lace Operatives' Union, for instance, have no estimate of the number of women in their union. The United Textile Workers' Union employ several women organisers, but its policy can hardly be called aggressive.

In the cigar and tobacco industries, 97,822 women are employed, of whom 3,669 are under 15 years of age. The Cigarmakers' Union in 1920 claimed 6,700 women members. In 1924 it claimed no more than 2,000 women members, of whom 1,300 were organised in the same locals as men. Almost 700 women were organised in separate women's locals. The manufacturing of cigars is another process which has become decidedly decentralised by the machine technique. The industry in the past ten years has become a predominantly female-employing trade. The union, organised originally as a highly skilled craft union, fought the introduction of machines and women into the trade. The original constitution limited membership to "male whites." Several years later, the term "whites" was eliminated, and admission into the union

was granted to Negro workers. It was only a few years ago, however, that women were admitted.

No real organisation policy has been developed to organise the increasing number of women in the trade. Few active women organisers have been developed in the union. There is a constitutional provision against employing an organiser who is not a member of the union, and the men organisers of the union are either indifferent or have their hands full with other problems.

The Tobacco Workers' Union claimed 1,140 women members in 1924. There were 6,500 in 1920. The union has no special policy of organisation, nor has it ever employed women organisers.

There are some 33,246 women employed as barbers, hairdressers and manicurists. The Barbers' Union until this year has not admitted women to its membership. In a number of large cities, however, manicurists, hairdressers and workers in beauty parlours have small and struggling independent unions.

In the broom and brush manufacturing industry, where 2,780 women are employed, 15 women are claimed by the Broom and Whisk Makers' Union. This industry has been transferred to a large extent to prison workshops and is therefore completely demoralised as far as unionisation is concerned.

The Laundry Workers' industry, employing 72,675 women, of whom 2,199 are girls under 15, claimed a union membership of about 5,000 women in 1924, (6,200 in 1920), employed at skilled and unskilled work. Though the union has no special policy, its officials seem to be aware of the preponderance of women

in the industry. They understand the problems and attempt to meet them with their limited resources and the strength of the union.

The Upholsterers' Union, covering an industry employing some 3,318 women, claimed a membership of almost 2,000 women, skilled and unskilled. They are organised in separate women's locals, officered by women. A definite and active organisation policy to reach the women in this trade has been developed by the union, which is comparatively young.

In professional service, in which 1,016,498 women are employed, the total percentage of women organised in 1920 was estimated at 1.5 per cent. The Actors' Equity Association claimed 4,000 women members in 1924 (3,900 in 1920). The American Federation of Musicians claimed about 2,600 women members in 1924 (1,000 in 1920). The American Federation of Teachers claimed about 5,200 women in 1924 (2,500 in 1920).

In these unions, with the exception of the American Federation of Teachers, no policy of organisation has been developed because it has been seemingly unbecoming and "unethical" to make any special efforts to reach the women in the professions. The Actors' Equity organises its members through the closed-shop agreement.

In domestic and personal service, comprising some 1,935,510 women, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union claimed some 4,000 women members in 1924 (5,400 in 1920). The Laundry Workers claimed 5,000 women members in 1924. None of these unions

has developed any organisation policy for women, though the Laundry Workers' Union has made a number of special organisation campaigns. The percentage of organised men in this industry is not more than 10 per cent. The proportion of organisation among women, however, who predominate in the industry, is less than 1 per cent.

In the clerical industries, at which almost a million and a half women are employed, the Bookkeepers' and Stenographers' Union claimed only several hundred women. The National Post Office Clerks claimed about 3,000 women, the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks claimed about 10,000 women, and the National Federation of Federal Employees claimed about 9,000 women. It will be observed that the most extensive organisation among women takes place in the so-called public industries. Organisation in these industries was promulgated during the war, with the aid of the government contract agreements.

It has been estimated that the total number of women organised in the United States in 1924 is about 250,000.

CHAPTER V

CAN WOMEN WORKERS BE ORGANISED?

(Continued)

It will be observed from the evidence in the preceding chapter that few unions have developed any crystallised technique for organising women workers. So-called "common sense methods," frequently effective, frequently sterile in results have been used by international and local unions. These methods have succeeded to a degree in the skilled trades but have failed among unskilled workers.

It is true that "common sense methods" are generally based upon the wealth of practical experience in handling workers and economic situations, as well as upon the ordinary knowledge of the psychology of groups which the shrewd labour leader or organiser is sure to have. But "common sense methods" tend to fall behind the technical changes in an industry. They are part of the mental equipment of the organiser who may be oblivious to the scientific changes which have taken place since first he left the work-bench and entered the organising end of the trade union movement. Moreover, few unions have recognised the need of changing their structural formation to suit the psychology and occupational needs of the great army of unskilled women workers. It is not by mere chance

that those unions appreciating this need for a new organisation policy have the largest number of organised women in their membership. There is obviously a crying need for a special approach, if women are to be organised in the labour movement of the United States.

There have been successful and unsuccessful methods of organising workers in every industry, but those which have proven successful in the organisation of women have been few indeed. The National Women's Trade Union League organised in 1903, was the first to develop a technique of organising women workers which the American labour movement had hitherto failed to accomplish. The leading spirits of this organisation were women, not of the labour movement, but interested in it. They were conscious of the need of organising women workers. They were conscious, too, of the fact that the various international unions which should have undertaken the work were not functioning along these lines. The contribution of the Women's Trade Union League to the technique of organisation was a realisation of the special problems besetting women workers and the initiation of methods, jargon, and social activities that women understood. Women organisers, women speakers, women trade unionists were developed and encouraged by them to work in a field of organisation that had generally been considered hopeless.

The Women's Trade Union League aroused the public consciousness to a consideration of the conditions under which women were working. The or-

ganisers of the League were themselves women who were aware of the social handicaps and public disapproval which would meet any rebellion on the part of workers. They created and stimulated an aura of public approval for any effort to improve the conditions of working women. The public even learned to sanction attempts at union organisation of "poor working girls."

In the strike of the New York garment workers of 1909, the facts disclosing the unsanitary conditions under which the garments were manufactured, plus the tremendous fight which the striking garment workers were putting up, caused men and women of wealth, the press, the clergy, and prominent figures in public life to rally to the cause of the striking women workers. This had a unique effect upon the psychology and morale of the women workers themselves. They had secured the sanction of "respectability" in their efforts, they were not stigmatised as "disorderly persons." This was indeed the beginning of a new approach to the problem of organising women.

The technique of organisation varies from group to group, and from individual to individual. The nucleus of successful organisation work is an understanding of the psychology of the woman worker and a familiarity with her social and racial habits of thinking. In the diary of a girl organiser in the clothing industry, this factor is well-stated: "You won't get the girl to join unless you talk to her in the language she knows, in terms that fall in line with her everyday living. You must study her, know her, understand her, or she won't

understand you."[1] Here are a few of the lightning-changes she must make in adjusting her tactics to her girls:

"*Monday.* Have been after one girl a long time. She has a lot of fire and is something of a leader. This was my third visit to her house. I did not begin to discuss the union right away. We had discussed it rather fully at the previous meetings. To-night she was wearing silk stockings with some peculiar clocks on them. We naturally fell into a discussion of hose and their clocks, and at the end of the hour she said, apropos of nothing, that she'd 'join up.'

"*Wednesday.* Went after S. to-night, and found that it was a case of getting father and mother. With mother, I discussed the waywardness of the younger generation and with father the terrible effects of Prohibition, and here and there edged in a word about the A. C. W. of A. And daughter joined. She is a leader in her little group of about twenty girls and she promised to get the others.

"*Tuesday.* In front of shop to-day and Ruth came out with a hard luck story. She had married simply so that she could stop work, and now, ten days after the wedding, her husband lost his job. So Ruth is back on the job, with pessimistic ideas on the subject of marriage. But now she says that she is for the union, 'married or single.'

"*Wednesday.* Spoke to a girl who works in a very big shop to-day, who told me that she could not join the

[1] Hortense Powdermaker, *Diary of a Girl Organizer* in "Amalgamated Almanac," 1924, pp. 44-47.

union because the boss was her 'friend.' I questioned her further on what she meant by the boss being her 'friend,' and finally, after some discussion, she told me that he was her friend because he smiled at her whenever he saw her. Sometimes there was even a pleasant 'Good morning!' That was all—but he was her friend and she could not be 'disloyal' to him.

"*Friday.* Have a group of small town girls out on strike. They are all youngsters. We're having meetings daily, and along with them a good bit of singing and dancing. The girls are busy composing songs about themselves and their strike, to the popular tunes, and they have their yells and cheers, etc. It is a small village and the strike is quite the social event of the town, which, by the way, is almost 100 per cent union. After the meeting the girls have dancing. To-day, just for fun, I started them on the Virginia reel, which, incredible as it may seem, they had never heard of before. Every day, now, there is a loud demand for the 'reel.' The craze will wear off in a few days and then they will be back in jazz again.

"*Sunday.* Went to the movies this afternoon with four of the girls from the shop. They are a very independent sort. They take me in as one of them, but would resent my treating or anything of that kind; so we go 'Dutch.' I've noticed that the Bohemian girls are more scrupulously independent in financial matters than any other group I've come in contact with. The girls I was out with to-day are really very fine and independent.

"*Monday.* Strike on in L., small town, 100 per

cent union. The whole town is with us. A couple of girls did attempt to scab one day, but were prevented from entering the shop by the pickets. Since then we have had no trouble with the scabs. One girl, a very young one, was given a beating by her father (a union miner). She came to the meeting the next day, and asked if we wouldn't forgive her and take her back. We did."

The diary of the organiser reads like the diary of one who understands human psychology, who adapts her methods of organisation to the interests of the girls she is trying to reach, and talks about the "clocks on stockings" in order that she may obtain the opportunity of talking on the necessity of organisation and the value of joining the union.

The tactics which this organiser used with this particular group of girls cannot be used with every other group of women to be organised. It is a method of approach, however, to the organisation problem which the old-time male organiser may have acquired in his work with men, but which he cannot transfer to the organisation of women because they are primarily not interested in baseball, or pinochle, or the various other topics of "small talk" which makes conversation preliminary to union propaganda. If every necessary factor for trade union organisation of women were present, and the organiser failed to take into consideration the psychology of the women workers—their racial and cultural habits—this deficiency would be sufficient to spell failure. It stands to reason that the more recently organised unions having a large woman member-

ship, have a greater open-mindedness on the methods of reaching women workers, and are more able to cope with the problem.

The instances in union history of the failure to take cognisance of this psychology are legion. When an Irish organiser, with years of experience among the skilled craft workers—the old-time cigarmakers—is sent into a section of Chicago where Spanish and Slavic women are employed at cigar manufacturing machines, and told to organise these women, he reports failure after a month or two of work. He has tried to talk to them. They understand neither his language nor his mannerisms. Even his gesticulations are foreign to them. They are suspicious. Many of them may have had personal experiences with men cigar workers who bitterly fought the women workers entering their industry. The organiser tries to reach these women once, perhaps twice, and if he is very conscientious, he will even try a third time. He meets with failure. The Cigarmakers' Union observe the influx of women workers in the industry and their own decreasing membership. It resignedly accepts the fact that women cannot be organised, and is helpless to meet the situation. A clause in the constitution of the International Cigarmakers' Union makes it impossible for them to employ women organisers who are not members of the Cigarmakers' Union. The officials of the Union declare that no women members of the union are capable of being organisers, and therefore the organisation work among the women in this particular industry is at a standstill. "For want of an organiser, a union is lost!"

The observation of the organiser in her diary that Bohemian girls are "scrupulously independent" is an important one. It may be a racial characteristic or an individual one, but it is something an organiser should know, for it may necessitate a change in strategy. At a recent union meeting of Italian girls, in Rochester, great excitement and some hysteria prevailed. It seems the meeting broke up at ten o'clock in deference to the custom of the Italian parents, who required that their daughters be at home as soon after nightfall as possible. One of the girls happened to look out of the window and saw a man lounging against a lamp-post in front of the union headquarters. The girls waited for fully an hour in the hope that he would go away. The police were called by the girls who by this time were in a state of great alarm. It was found that the man was the father of one of the girls, and was patiently waiting to take her home.

Another instance of failure to adapt tactics to racial habits occurred in the 1924 strike of the garment workers in New York. A shop employing Italian and Negro girls was called out on strike. A Jewish organiser, speaking English but poorly, was authorised to take care of the girls in this shop. The Italian girls did not understand him, nor did the Negro girls. They refused to come out on strike, and when the organiser began to bully them, they became even more adamant. That particular shop never joined the strike. The failure of the union organisation fully to appreciate the psychology of a nationality different from their own was responsible for this fiasco.

Organisers in the past have failed to penetrate large industrial corporations employing thousands of women workers and priding themselves on unique welfare and personnel departments. The group loyalty which such firms create through clubs, gymnasiums, picnics, bonuses, etc., indicates a utilisation of the modern methods of influencing minds. What chance have union organisers to break down this well-padded group loyalty to the "boss"? Practically none.

A glance at the figures on the extent of union organisation in those industries employing thousands of unskilled women workers will tell the tale of failure. And yet these women are often miserably paid, have little opportunity for advancement, and are not satisfied with their economic position. They have every reason for dissatisfaction and every need for organisation. Frequently a clever organiser has succeeded in getting an entering wedge for unionism into a corporation that failed to supply one social activity for which there happened to be a demand. Thus a union organiser in a mid-Western town started a tennis club for the union members and invited the girls from a large factory in the vicinity which had resisted organisation through its personnel work. The tennis club soon became the instrument of union propaganda.

Frequently organised men in local communities have become incensed at the conditions under which the women-folk of their families were compelled to work. In the mining camp of Kortcamp in southern Illinois, a glass factory was operated by the owner of the mine. The wives, sisters, and daughters of the miners were

employed in the factory at extremely low wages. The miners' local union called the girls out on strike, set aside several thousand dollars from their treasury to be paid in strike benefits. The strike was on for several weeks. The miners went out on sympathetic strike. The militia was called out by the owner of the mine and glass factory and a bitter feud took place.

The girls were organised in a special local, received a charter, and were presumably expected to manage their union with the competency of old-time unionists. After all the money, energy and health expended in this strike, after the strike of the glass workers was won and their wages increased, the girls' union disbanded. The men were disgusted. "What was the use of trying to organise women anyhow?"

And yet an analysis of the situation revealed the fact that these girls never really learned to manage their union affairs. During the strike the miners' local managed their affairs for them. After the strike was won the girls were left to sink or swim without the necessary preliminary instructions or union guidance. They sank.

The following item in the diary of the girl organiser quoted above gives a picturesque description of the adaptability of the organiser: "One of the Italian girls on strike had been begging me to come to her home. So the morning after we left the picket line, I went home with her. They played the Victrola and put on all the Italian music for my benefit. Angelina discovered that I knew the Italian dances, and her mother,

Mrs. R., sixty years old and very much worn with care and worry, dropped all her housework and came into the parlour and whirled me around in Italian waltzes. We ended up, of course, with spaghetti and wine." [2]

Many of these racial biases are changed after the women worker has undergone a process of assimilation. The assimilation process, however, is much slower for women of foreign birth than for men. It varies with environment and industrial surroundings. "Among the prizes of American freedom are: more considerate treatment from the men of their family than was received in the old country; more freedom than they formerly had in going and coming—although Italians assimilate this slowly; and in the case of girls who come unmarried, more freedom of choice in the matter of taking a husband. If an industry employing both foreign-born men and women pays some attention to the human relations of its women workers, and if it has forewomen as well as foremen, and both women and men serving as representatives on its shop committees, the effect of this cannot help reacting upon the home attitude of the foreign-born men who are witness to it." [3]

This is an analysis of the problem of the immigrant woman in industry from the point of view of industry. The same analysis can be made for the other side of the picture—the trade union side. The failure of the American trade unions to assimilate foreign workmen was and is a distinct problem. Even more evident is

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] William Leiserson, *Adjusting the Immigrant to Industry,* p. 305.

the failure of the union organisations to "bother with" women workers, be they foreign-born or American.

This brings us to a discussion of the ways and means of reaching women workers. Shall the organiser be a man or a woman? Shall the women be organised in locals separated from men? What specific means of arousing interest and maintaining it shall be used—the printed leaflet, the strike, the use of outside educators, the use of social activities, etc.?

The life of a union organiser is "not a soft snap nor a bed of roses," as one organiser cryptically put it. Irregular hours of work, constant travelling, inability to live at home because of the nature of the work, are only a few of the physical discomforts which accompany the job. Mental alertness, ingenuity, adaptability to personalities, organisation ability, tact and many other virtues necessary for the person in public life, constitute the mental requirements of a good organiser. The question as to whether a man or woman is the best organiser for women workers is a debatable one. Like other questions of this type, the solution is dependent upon the situation, the group to be organised, and the personality of the organisers. It has been the policy of most local unions to use as organisers workers who have been particularly active in some strike or in local union meetings. International unions, as well as the American Federation of Labor, have generally appointed erstwhile officials of the union as organisers. Practical experience, intuition, or the political sagacity of the official who is responsible for the appointment, usually make up the qualifications of the organiser.

The American Federation of Labor has generally appointed one or two women organisers on its general staff of organisers. Those international unions which have few women employ no women organisers as we have pointed out in the previous chapter. Unions having a very large woman membership employ a number of women organisers, though in no way commensurate with the number of men organisers. Thus the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, the United Textile Workers and the Upholsterers' Union employ women organisers, usually in the proportion of one woman organiser to three men organisers. Most unions have adopted the policy of employing as organisers only those who have been employed in their trade. Since the number of women actively participating in union life has been limited, and since the social prejudices are great, the number of women to choose from is very small indeed.

It happens that certain groups of women workers are particularly responsive to the woman organiser. One of the unions in the needle trades found that the very young girls employed in small towns and villages in the Middle West could not be organised by men organisers. In the first place, the job was one which required great tact, much personal influence of the sort with which the *Diary of a Girl Organiser* teems, and much patience. The man organiser failed with these young American girls, where the woman organiser, with her patience, self-sacrifice, enthusiasm and idealism, succeeded. On the other hand, a group

of Polish women in the stock yards of Chicago could be organised only by the eloquent persuasion of a popular Polish leader.

The issue as to whether women or men are better organisers among women workers is by no means a clear-cut one. It depends, to a large extent, upon the personality of the organiser, regardless of sex and the psychology of the group. The question of whether an organiser must necessarily come from the ranks of the industry is another debatable question. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' Union have, from time to time, employed women organisers who were not members of the union.

College-trained women who specialise in economic and labour problems, and who are fired with an enthusiasm and idealism to serve the labour movement, have been successful in organisation work. These women have made many contributions to the technique of organisation. With a trained mind and a knowledge of working women's psychology, with no opportunity or desire for political advancement in the union to seduce her away from the interests of the local group, this type of organiser has by dint of sheer perseverance, enthusiasm and understanding, been able to organise girls who were considered unorganisable by the men officials of the union.

Men officials of the union have objected to women organisers in the same fashion and for the same reasons that they have objected to women in industry. "The

woman organiser can't stand the strain of living away from home and being constantly on the go. It's a man's job," stated one official. "Organising is selling unionism. It means being on the road like a travelling salesman, and women just can't stand it," offered another official. "College women take the job too seriously. They work at organising with too much intensity and at the end of a couple of years they are all knocked out, nervous, sensitive, unable to stand the rebukes of officials of the union, or even of the employers they have to deal with."

These comments of union officials on the efficacy of using women organisers tell one side of the story. Undoubtedly the criticism is warranted in instances, but is this not another manifestation of the psychology which condemns an entire policy because of one or two failures? The tendency has been for men officials of the union to expect the woman organiser "to produce the goods" within a short time. He is apt to be more impatient for results from them, than from men organisers.

The strike, the mass meeting, the house to house canvass, the organisation leaflet, the social dance or picnic are all factors in organising women workers. The necessity of developing a group spirit among women, who are essentially individualists, is the basis of union organisation. For this reason the organiser must understand not only the psychology of the women to be organised, but must carry on an educational and social campaign as well, in the name of union organisation.

The organisation policies of the individual unions give no indication of the particular tactics employed, though it is taken for granted that some or all of the aforementioned may be used. There can be no formulation of rules as to how to organise, but there can be an application of the methods which have proved successful with other groups.

A campaign of organisation is like a military campaign. Its success depends upon strategic attacks at strategic moments. The consensus of trade union experience recognises the comparative futility of organising workers in periods of unemployment or during business depression. If the campaign necessitates a strike in the industry, as it usually does, the likelihood is that it will be quickly broken by the use of unemployed workers willing to "scab." The consensus of trade union experience also recognises the necessity of making a mass appeal as well as an individual appeal. Masses of workers must be aroused to a fighting enthusiasm. "Key-workers" in the industry, like field-marshals, must be influenced and educated to rally the workers who will follow them when the union calls "strike!" And last but not least, an idealism and faith in the "cause" must be created by all sorts of educational and agitational means. These four factors—the strategic movement, a plan of organisation, mass appeal and personal appeal, and "key-workers" with personality and integrity—are essentials of a successful organisation campaign.

Most unions have learned empirically the best time to "pull a strike" or start an organisation campaign.

Few unions, however, actually develop a plan of organisation for a unionisation campaign. The Telephone Operators' Department of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers worked out a Regional Plan of organisation work which might have been effective had it not been initiated at the period of business depression. This plan was to divide the country into the eight or nine regional divisions into which the Bell Telephone Company had divided its system. A few active and interested girls in each division were to be the "key-workers." The organisation work of each division was to spread out from the "key-worker" as a nucleus. Conferences were to be held and agreements made in these geographical units. Depending upon the fact that a certain group discipline and group spirit was inherent in the work of the telephone operators in every exchange, the plan was to transfer this group discipline into a union consciousness through persistent educational and social activities undertaken by the organisers of each Region. This plan had been most successful in the New England division. Its apparent failure in the other parts of the country has been attributed to the staunch opposition put up by the telephone company, and the lack of funds in the treasury of the Telephone Operators' Department to wage so tremendous a campaign single-handed.[4]

There have been no united drives to organise unskilled women workers, such as the great organisation campaign in the steel industry in 1919. The steel

[4] *Convention Proceedings, Telephone Operators' Department,* Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, 1921.

industry, practically unorganised, employing a large percentage of unskilled, foreign workers, could not be organised by any one union. The undertaking was too great, the opposition too strong, and the finances needed, more than any one union could expend. Consequently, when the National Committee for Organising Iron and Steel Workers was formed it consisted of representatives from twenty-four unions representing at that time two million members of the American labour movement.

This committee developed a plan of organisation that was unprecedented both in system and in shrewdness of appeal to mass morale. The plan included a system of floating and stationary organisers, a financial system, involving a series of checks in which all money could be accounted for. Mass meetings, foreign language speakers, food commissaries, parades, arrests, free speech trials—all accompanied the course of one of the greatest strikes in the country, and one of the most intensive campaigns for union organisation ever undertaken in the history of American labour.

The steel strike failed for a number of reasons. One of them was the "official pessimism, bred of thirty years of trade-union failure in the steel industry," which resulted in the gradual decline in the activity of the co-operating unions.[5] This type of trade-union pessimism would undoubtedly prevail in an organisation campaign among women workers. It is quite obvious, however, that one union with limited finances

[5] W. Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike*. pp. 28-50.

cannot organise the several hundred thousand unorganised women in the radio industry, in the telephone industry, in the cigar industry or in the baking industry. That such organisation will have to be undertaken by the united efforts of the entire labour movement seems inevitable.

There are many minor trappings of organisation work which should be considered. The custom of paying organisers or members of a union a certain sum for each new member brought into the union has played an important rôle in organisation. This method has its virtues and its vices, for it serves as a monetary incentive to secure new members for the union. On the other hand, the new members do not often stay within the organisation unless it carries on intensive educational work among them.

Then there is the matter of printed appeals, leaflets, and posters to attract the unorganised worker. In this field many of the trade unions show a sad lack of the "sense of publicity." The influence which the printed word had in creating propaganda for the last war can never be estimated. But the simplest rules of publicity psychology are rarely used by the average union.

A Candy Workers' Union in a large industrial city issued recently a leaflet which was distributed to the girls at the gates of the candy factories. The statement read:

"Come to a Mass Meeting of Candy Workers and Protest against your Working Conditions."

Five girls responded to this call and appeared at the "mass meeting." The organiser was greatly discouraged and was confirmed in his impression that it was impossible to organise candy workers. It is true that it has been extremely difficult to organise candy workers. They are young, unskilled and ephemeral workers. But a group of socially minded college girls would no more respond to such a "call" than did the candy workers. All working girls are not interested in "protesting against their working conditions." It would take something more stimulating than this slip of paper to make them want to protest and act "unladylike."

In contrast with this type of organisation leaflet, a garment workers' local in Chicago prepared a set of educational leaflets, attractively printed on different coloured paper with headline appeals which read as follows:

"Dressmakers
Stop Being Hypnotised.
Open Your Eyes and
See Who Your Friends Are.
Can a Boss be a Friend of the Worker?
Any Honest Boss Must Say and Says 'No!'

"Why? you ask. Because a boss is in business to make money and make as much profit as he can. His profit depends not only upon how much he gets for his garments, but also on how little he pays the producer of the garments."

The rest of the pamphlets were written in this vein, and were distributed at the shop entrances each week. This leaflet campaign bore fruit—not immediately, but the campaign was a persistent one. The leaflets were written with an eye to the words and ideas which would catch the attention of the women dressmakers in the shops, and when an organisation meeting was called the number of women workers who attended was more than five. Of course, one is aware that there are many contributing factors which make organisation more possible among dressmakers than among candy-makers. There is a strong dressmakers' union in existence, ready to fight the battles of the unorganised women as well as the organised. There is no strong union among the candy-makers and no persistent efforts are made to organise these workers. Certainly unions will have to learn the lesson, which is so well ingrained in modern business, that publicity of any sort must be well done. The printed appeal must be issued on good paper, in attractive form, with captions that attract the mind and the eye of the reader. the affirmative appeal is always more successful than the negative one. Circulars must be brief and to the point, besides being sufficiently repetitious to hammer the point across to the group to be reached. These are but a few suggestions that are commonly known by every advertiser, but the trade union has been slow to learn these elements.

Organisation work costs money it is true, and unless accompanied by a zeal and faith which springs from deep-rooted idealism and faith in the cause, it is futile.

Constructive Suggestions

The most outstanding examples of the development of a technique for organising are to be found in the 1919 campaign among the steel workers, the 1920 campaign in the meat packing industry and the 1926 campaign to organise the textile workers in Passaic, New Jersey. The two former campaigns described previously were initiated by several international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. The inability of the labour leaders to rid themselves of their craft loyalty in a campaign to organise an entire industry of unskilled workers, has been acknowledged as one of the reasons for the failure of these two organising campaigns. Large international unions were overwhelmed with the idea of losing their craft identity and refused to make good on the financial and moral support which they had pledged.

The recent strike and organisation campaign among the unskilled textile workers of Passaic manifests the signs of a carefully planned programme of action based upon a consideration of the heterogeneous nationalities of the workers, their lack of skill, and the fact that a large proportion of the workers are women. The campaign was not initiated by unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. It was led by men and women, fired by the enthusiasm of radical political and economic principles. These leaders were free from the disillusionments of previous experiences in organisation work; they were not handicapped by a craft psy-

chology, and they had no union traditions to uphold.

When in January, 1926, a reduction of wages was announced by the owners of the textile mills of Passaic, a committee calling themselves the United Front Committee stepped into the field and began to organise and discipline the 16,000 unskilled workers. Recognising the difficulty of sustaining the morale of a mass of workers composed of sixteen different nationalities, the committee in charge employed foreign language-speaking organisers, both men and women. Mass meetings were arranged for all nationalities. Picket lines were strategically placed. Definite plans for mass appeal as well as appeals to the individual workers were carried out. Thus parades, meetings and concerts were arranged. House-to-house canvassing of workers who had not originally joined the strikers was undertaken by the organisers. To overcome the despair that arises from poverty, food commissaries were established. A special publicity committee was appointed. Liberals, religious leaders, social workers, and all sorts of socially conscious people were drawn into the strike as speakers and publicity workers. The unusually stupid and brutal tactics of local police and judges made daily newspaper publicity possible and especially effective.

Sixteen thousand unskilled, low-paid workers, the larger proportion of them women, have been out on strike for months. They have been well organised and well trained in union principles. The committee in charge of the strike has evolved a definite technique of organisation applicable to the textile industry. It remains to be seen how effective this organisation method

will be when the strike is settled and the period of spectacular fireworks is over. A union may be successfully initiated by so spectacular a strike as the Passaic one—but its viability depends upon something more than fireworks. At any rate it cannot be denied that Passaic has demonstrated to the American labour movement that unskilled, low-paid women workers *can* be organised.

What has been the experience of the European labour movements in this matter of organising women workers? When the International Federation of Working Women, composed of delegates from the trade unions of all industrial countries, met in Geneva in 1923, and considered the extent of trade union organisation among women workers, it adopted the following principles:

(1) That where men and women are employed in the same industry, they should be organised in the same union.

(2) That each country shall through its national labour body, endeavour to secure an intensive campaign among women and girl workers, giving particular attention to the least paid workers. Such campaigns shall be carried on with the assistance of women speakers and organisers having practical knowledge of the conditions in the trades.

(3) Special leaflets appealing to women workers in such a campaign shall be prepared.

(4) There shall be an encouragement and development of recreational activities in the unions.[6]

[6] "Monthly Labor Review," June, 1925.

Following these suggestions, the representatives of the Women's division of the Trade Union Congress of England returned to England to co-operate with the general council of the Trade Union Congress in a "Back-to-the-Union Drive."

A special campaign for organising women was then planned by the Women's Committee. The country was divided into industrial districts. Several unions carried on their campaign in one district at the same time, pooling their financial resources as well as their organising forces. Special leaflets appealing to women workers were issued. Special women's committees arranged for trade union propaganda among women workers in the large industrial districts. Special workers' meetings and shop-door meetings during the dinner hour or as workers left in the evening, were held. At each of these meetings leaflets were distributed urging membership in the particular union of the industry. Some unions found a house-to-house canvass of the workers in the industry a very effective means of organisation.

In those industries where men and women were working side by side, organising activities were not carried on separately for women, although a special staff of district organisers including women were appointed and were made responsible for organising both men and women in the industry.

The needle trades' unions employed special women factory workers full time or part time to assist in distributing leaflets and conducting the union propaganda, as well as to arrange social entertainments and meet-

ings. Such tactics resulted in a substantial increase in the number of women organised.

A number of clerical workers' unions had special women organisers and women district secretaries.

Through the activities of the Women's Department of the National Union of General Workers, an intensive campaign among women office and clerical workers was instituted. Women organisers, special leaflets, special social activities, etc., proved most effective in this campaign.

It is extremely interesting to note that throughout the activities of these unions to organise women workers, inspiration and interest was furnished by the British Trade Union Congress and their officials. In 1923 there were 4,590,000 men in the British trade unions and 815,000 women.

In Germany the female membership of the trade union movement suffered a tremendous loss as a result of the industrial and economic crises following the war. The German Federation of Labour recognised the need of regaining this membership as well as its male membership and planned a series of special campaigns among women workers. The Women's Secretariat of the General Federation of Trade Unions was established to study general questions relating to working women in the trade union movement, and a special women's paper became the medium of special educational activity. The campaigns were carried on either in industrial districts with several unions co-operating, or in special industries with the union of the industry making a special drive through a series of "unionisation

days." On such days women members were recruited for the unions in a sort of "revival" or festival drive. The actual educational work for good union citizenship was carried on later by the union locals.

It has been the experience of the German trade union movement that the material advantages which come with trade union membership play a greater rôle with women than with men.[7] This experience has led to emphasis being placed upon the relief and benefit features of union membership in all printed and oral appeals to women workers.

Most German unions offer financial help to unmarried women members in purchasing their trousseau. Financial aid is also given to women members in confinement. Social gatherings and recreational activities are particularly stressed in organisation campaigns among women. The total union membership in Germany in 1924 was estimated to be over 4,500,000. Of these 921,140 were women members.[8]

The recent decision of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to initiate a special organisation campaign among women workers has resulted in a plan of organisation which is decidedly sound. If it is actually executed it will herald a new era in the official policy of the American Federation of Labor.

The first item in the plan is to secure *advance information* pertaining to the industries to be organised.

[7] Gertrude Hanna, *German Organizing Methods,* in "American Federationist," April, 1926.

[8] "Monthly Labor Review," March, 1926.

Trade unions have not learned the value of keeping union statistics, hence they have not been cognisant of the necessity of having accurate information concerning the industries to be organised. It is important to know the number of workers employed in an industry, their sex and their nationality, as well as the occupations at which they are engaged. Accurate figures on wages, hours, conditions of work and the proportion of organised to unorganised workers in the industry should be available to the organiser. It is equally important for the union leaders to know something about the economics of the industry which they are trying to organise; the amount of production, the value of products, the rate of profits, the proportion of wages to profits, etc. This furnishes invaluable propaganda and publicity material in the conduct of an organisation campaign.

The next item in the proposed plan for organising women workers is *sectioning the country into industrial districts,* and securing the financial and organising co-operation of all the unions having any hold at all in the particular industrial district. It has been pointed out that organisation work is expensive and that organising unskilled women workers having no class consciousness or union experience is too gigantic an undertaking for one union. The limited resources of small and weak unions necessitate united drives. Therefore, it would seem that this plan of co-operation in organisation is most practical.

Another item in the plan is that of *sustained efforts* in organisation work. This involves developing

methods of keeping workers in the union movements after the organisation campaign has achieved its goal. Workers' education can contribute much toward the development of an active class-conscious trade unionist. Classes, lectures, mass meetings, concerts, etc., have not been sufficiently utilised by the trade union movement in the actual development of trade union citizenship and responsibility.

Special educational work can help change the attitude of men unionists toward women workers and of women toward themselves. Both sexes should understand the origin of the social and economic ideas surrounding working women. Both sexes should understand the economic forces which compel women to work, and at the same time the pawn-like fashion with which industry has manœuvred them as competitors of men. An intensive and continuous educational campaign by the trade unions among women will do much to develop that group spirit which women have so sadly lacked. Such educational work will help keep women in the unions once they are organised.

Social and cultural activities such as recreational groups, dramatic clubs, sewing circles, dancing clubs, etc., should not be neglected in the efforts of the union to retain the interest of their women members. Union ideas will frequently reach women when sandwiched in between the numbers of a concert, or at a picnic or hike, whereas they may fail to appeal at a union meeting. It is true that unless these activities are cleverly handled the social activities may swamp the real issues of trade unionism. This has occurred in a number of

the women's auxiliaries which were primarily organised to keep the wife of the trade unionist interested in the labour movement. Lack of union participation and an excess of social activities have converted them into social organisations differing little from the numerous women's clubs.

The preparation of *special literature* is another item in the proposed plan of the A. F. of L. In anticipation of an organisation campaign among women workers in the industrial districts of New Jersey in the spring of 1926 the Federation issued appeal leaflets revealing an appreciation of the need for a special psychological approach to women workers.

Can women workers be organised? After an analysis of the various factors involved in trade union organisation—the permanency of the wage-earning group, the nature of the women workers' job, the tactics of organisation—we are convinced that women workers can be organised on the economic field—*if*. The *if* embodies a number of fundamental changes in trade union philosophy and psychology. *If* the trade union broadens its structural boundaries to include the unskilled worker—and women are for the most part unskilled. *If* the union officials, responsible for organisation policy, consider carefully and incorporate in their plans the psychology and racial traditions of the women to be organised. *If* the policy of special dues, initiation fees, and special duties are carefully considered as factors which reflect the existing differential in wages between men and women, and which tend to give this differential, trade union benediction,

resolutions on "equal pay for equal work" notwithstanding. *If* women workers generally will learn to consider themselves a permanent group in industry despite the impermanence of the individual.

CHAPTER VI

WOMEN AS MEMBERS OF TRADE UNIONS

When women were declared citizens of the community with voting power and a recognised political status, no marked change was to be observed in the political life of the country. In fact, the degree to which women have actually participated in political life has been extremely limited. Since the industrial revolution, and even prior to it, women have participated in industrial production, but have had little to say about the distribution of the wealth which they produced. Considering the trade union as an organisation attempting to effect a measure of control in industry in behalf of the interests of the workers have women members been active citizens of their economic organisation? Have they been any more active in the politics of the trade union than in the politics of the country?

In other words what sort of union members are these two hundred and fifty thousand organised women? Do they participate in union activities? Have they been responsible for new features in trade union philosophy? Are they active in trade union negotiations? Are they more active when separated in so-called women's locals? What is the difference

between the attitude of the organised women toward their work-place and their fellow-workers, and that of the unorganised women workers? These are a few of the questions which must be answered in order to ascertain the status of the women members of the trade unions.

The Women's Local—A Stimulant to Activity?

The testimony of most unions has been that though it is comparatively easy to organise women, the difficulty lies in holding them after they are organised. The recent failure of the Machinists' Union, the Electrical Workers, and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters' and Butchers' Workmen's Union to hold their women membership merely reinforces this general testimony. One of the methods developed to keep the women members has been the *women's local.* When the early unions created the women's local, they were impelled by two motives. One was a desire to stimulate union activity on the part of women members by permitting them to manage their own affairs. The other was a desire on the part of the union officials to "shove the women off" and not "bother with them."

There are about fifteen international unions in the United States, having separate women's locals for their women members. The women's local is to be found primarily in those industries where women are employed at tasks which differ entirely from men's, and at wages that are lower. The women's locals of the Bookbind-

ers' Union have developed comparative strength under this separation. Men and women bookbinders rarely compete for the same job, though during the last few years, women workers have made encroachments upon jobs in the bookbinding factories that have been considered the prerogatives of the men. The standard minimum wage of women bookbinders by union agreement is less than that of the men. There are eleven women's locals affiliated with the International Bookbinders' Union. All of the local officers are women, and all the work of organising, the management of the employment service, and the establishment of wage agreements are carried on by women. The wage agreements are usually made in conjunction with some of the male officers from the International Bookbinders' Union.

The secretary of a Bindery Women's local, in Washington, D. C., declared, when asked how this system of sex separation worked, "Oh, yes, we would rather work in separate locals because we can handle our affairs in our own way and don't have to stand for a lot of talk and cigar smoke from the men." The secretary of another women's local complained of the fact that "the men's bookbinders' local in this town has nothing to do with the women's local except when they are planning to call a strike. Then they ask for our co-operation. When we went on strike for higher wages, however, we got no help from them."

These two statements are interesting sidelights on the women's local. On the other hand, it is true that women, new at the art of expressing themselves,

are loath to get up and talk at a meeting, where men are present and predominate. They are "afraid" not only of the men but also of the criticism of the other women present. Consequently, as an incentive for self-expression both in discussion and in self-government, the women's local has a real contribution to make. The danger of the women's local lies in the fact that a psychological separation of economic interests takes place among the women—and the men. At the present time, there is too much of this attitude among the men trade unionists. The enhancement of the attitude would tend to widen the breach between men and women workers, in the face of an ever-growing identity of interests of all workers due to the expansion of industry and the introduction of the machine process.

At a meeting of a Bindery Women's local, at which the question of delegates to the national convention was discussed, one of the members made the following speech: "Local No. — (a men's local in the city) has it in for us. We want to show 'em what we can do. They're sending three delegates to the International convention; we're entitled to six but we can afford only four. That will give us at least one to the good over them." And then when instructions were given to the elected delegates, the parting shot of the president was: "Don't suppress your impulses to talk at the convention. You have as good a head as any man, and don't you forget it!"

This sort of rivalry is a sign of a healthy active spirit among the women members. There is a danger

that it may be carried too far, resulting in a type of sex war which would be most unfortunate for the trade unions. It would seem that though the women's locals are an excellent medium for securing active participation of the women members in some industries—nevertheless, the identity of interests between men and women workers must necessarily be fostered and established.

The accusation that the women's local is only a device on the part of the men of a union to shift responsibility was made against the Electrical Workers' Union by the Telephone Operators in 1921, when the question of a separate organisation came up for discussion at the convention. The weakly organised, and poorly paid telephone operators were by no means an asset to the financial or membership stability of the Electrical Workers' Union and from the point of view of self-preservation, the union felt justified in its action.

In the needle trades' unions, a number of women's locals have been established and have been in existence for several years. The women's local of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, known as Local 25, was organised in 1905. This local has been one of the most active participants in the union's activities. It has developed women leaders, has initiated and successfully carried on strikes, and has been responsible for the formulation of union policies. But although women have been an integral part of the executive board of the local it has always been officered by men since its inception.

The Upholsterers' Union has a number of active women's locals. In this industry, as in the needle trades, the women's locals are the nucleus of an occupational homogeneity. They not only represent a separation of sex but a separation of crafts. This situation seems to be more conducive to success than that of the locals which are made up of women of different crafts of one industry.

On the other hand, the history of women's locals is a record of failures. Women's locals have been organised in the boot and shoe, the textile and the pottery industries. They have flourished for a short time during a period of a strike, or an intensive organisation campaign. Then, left to themselves by the parent organisation, without educational supervision, with no prodding force to compel the women to participate in union activities, the locals disintegrated from sheer ennui, and financial and leadership bankruptcy.

If it were safe to make generalisations from a study of the experiences of women's locals in the trade union movement one might say that they are the best type of organisation for the trade union novice to undertake. But once she has learned to express herself, once she has learned the principles of unionism and has achieved a class consciousness; once she has added to that knowledge the necessity of sex solidarity as well as class solidarity in industry, then should the women's locals be merged with the men's locals for their mutual benefit. To say that only by working together for their economic welfare, can men and women

achieve the good life, may sound platitudinous. It is, none the less, true.

Women as Union Members

The unwritten annals of American trade union history are filled with the evidence of heroism, self-sacrifice and idealism of the trade unionists during the period of strike. But the strength and endurance of the union, unfortunately, is to be measured by the stability of its membership during "normal" periods or during periods of industrial depression. Hoxie has distinguished trade unions along functional lines—business unionism, uplift unionism, revolutionary unionism, and predatory unionism. Perhaps we would not endorse such clearly defined lines of demarcation in an analysis of unionism to-day, since the functions and ideals have become so interwoven. Every union, however, depends upon four fundamental factors, *an active membership, wise leadership, an ample treasury,* and *ideals.* To consider the women trade unionists as functioning members one must appraise them in terms of these four factors.

Active Membership. It is difficult to ascertain quantitatively, the extent of participation by women members in union activities. Such a thing as the "degree of activity" is more or less a matter of interpretation. Yet on every hand the cry is heard that the women members of the trade unions are not active, will not assume responsibility, and cannot become interested in union discussions. Such generalisations

may be based on actual facts, and yet the accusation should certainly not be made against all women in every union.

The problem of interesting the rank and file member to take an active part in union meetings, not only by attending them, but by participating in whatever discussion is on the floor, is indeed a serious one. It is not peculiar only to trade union organisations. It is to be found in almost every public organisation, be it the monthly meeting of the real estate operators of a community, or a session of the state legislature. There will always be a few individuals, who, for one reason or another, are interested in some particular subject to come up for discussion. They will attend the meeting, monopolise the discussion, pull wires, lobby, and finally secure the vote, if one is necessary, of the more or less apathetic rank and file. It requires an all inclusive and vital question to stimulate an active response of the average member of any community, whether it be political or economic.

The average woman is still a newcomer in political life. Politics as she knows it is remote from her immediate or personal problems. Long years of traditional influences and habits of thinking have made her an individualist. Scientists disagree as to whether this individualism is an inherent attribute of the female sex or whether it is an acquired characteristic, the result of culture.

The union meeting is a political microcosm. The occasions when the entire membership of a local union turns out for a meeting are so few that officials of

the union consider them unusual events. It is usually some outstanding event that is responsible for the attendance!

The procedure of the ordinary union meeting involves the reading of previous minutes, the payment of dues, business of good and welfare. A committee reports on a sick member, or on a member who works in a non-union shop, or on the necessity of sending a delegation to see a certain employer. In unions where women are in the minority, their attendance at these meetings is very small indeed. There is no way of estimating their proportion in comparison to that of the men present, but it is generally acknowledged that it is very much smaller.

What are the usual reasons given by women members for their absence from union meetings? "I had to go home and help my mother," or "I had to make a dress for myself," or "I was sick," or "I worked overtime and was too tired to come," or "I didn't think anything important was coming up, and it was such a nice day," are only a few.

A number of traditions have grown around the union meeting. In the first place, most union halls or meeting places are dirty and unattractive. The room is filled with smoke, the floors are decorated with bespattered spittoons, the windows are usually closed and the air is chokingly foul. To break away from the old traditional union hall is something which only a handful of protesting women in a local union have been able to effect.

Another tradition of the union meeting is a failure

to start on scheduled time. If a union meeting is called for seven, it starts at eight. Every union member knows it, and comes an hour later. If it is scheduled for eight, it starts at nine o'clock. This lack of punctuality has been considered a characteristic of workers. Since they have no industrial responsibility, they have not developed a "business at nine o'clock" attitude.

At any rate, here are two facts which the woman worker faces in the mere physical environment of a union meeting. Usually she is a stickler for a modicum of cleanliness in the places she frequents, be it shop or union hall. If she is Italian or Slavic, or belongs to any of the races that feel a "woman's place is in the home," she finds a union meeting that breaks up at midnight an iniquitous thing!

To come back, however, to the content of the meeting. In the last three years, some of the largest unions in the country have developed a number of vital issues in addition to the usual "wages and hours" issues. Many union meetings have discussed the following questions: Shall the union endorse a labour party? Shall the union urge recognition of Soviet Russia? Shall a shop steward plan be installed? Much heated controversy has taken place over these topics. The factional division between so-called "Lefts" and "Rights" in the trade union movement has also been responsible for much discussion and the injection of many new issues in union discussion. This spirit of unrest and controversy within the trade union movement has actually had a marked effect upon the attendance at meetings. Not only have more men been

attending the meetings but even the women's attendance has increased. "There is something doing at the union meeting to-night!" And when "something is doing," the ennui of the day's monotonous work is broken up, and a change is in store!

If women have not attended union meetings in the past it has undoubtedly been due to their lack of political interest, the poor environment of the union meeting, and the lack of attraction in the procedure of the meeting.

On the other hand, at the meetings of the needle trades' unions, the women members are exceedingly active. It was the women's local of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (Local 25) that trained women speakers, shop chairladies and organisers. It was in this same women's local that discussions on union reforms, the "left-right" issues, and other topics were first brought up before the union membership. In fact it has been stated that the most active "left wing" movement of the Garment Workers' Union was led by the women's local. This fact has been attributed to the restlessness and intellectual curiosity of the Jewish worker, particularly the Jewish woman worker. She finds little satisfaction for her personal aspirations in the world in which she works and lives. She gives vent to her suppressed personal emotions in an intensely emotional conflict within the union, which represents an important medium of expression for her.

Whatever the psychology of women workers may be it has been observed that they participate best in

union activities when those activities assume a sort of spirit of intense idealism, with potential self-martyrdom, or in other words, when unionism becomes a form of economic religion. What women must still learn is to participate in the brick-by-brick building of the union structure.

Strike Activity. No form of union activity lends itself so quickly to capturing the imagination of women workers as the strike. Most of the women's unions of the past started with a strike. Although it is true of many unions that they were conceived through a strike, it is particularly so of the women's organisations. The Corset Workers' Union of Kalamazoo, Michigan, was organised in 1912 as a result of a spontaneous strike of the girls following a reduction in wages. These girls were all Americans, not versed in union organisation. When Josephine Casey, the organiser of the union, conducted a series of "picket prayers" in front of the factory, and got the girls to repeat, with religious fervour, the prayer, which ran in part, "Oh, God, Our Father, Who art generous: Our employer who has plenty, has denied our request. He has misused the law to help him crush us. Thou who didst save Noah and his family, may it please Thee to save the girls now on strike, from the wicked city of Sodom. Oh, help us to get a living wage. Grant that we may win the strike . . . so that we may not need to cry often: 'Lord, deliver us from temptation,' " the organisation was effected on the sheer courage of these strikers.[1]

That spirit of fervent zeal accompanied every

[1] Louis Levine, *loc. cit.*, p. 221.

woman's strike of any consequence. Throughout the early history of women's trade unions, the strike was the emergency which rallied oppressed and exploited women workers to action and life. After every strike of the cotton mill operatives, an organisation was formed. The Factory Girls' Association was formed after the 1834 Lowell strike. The Female Labour Reform Association was organised after a series of strikes on the part of working women for the ten-hour day. The Daughters of St. Crispin, an organisation of women shoe workers, was the outcome of a strike of shoe workers in Lynn, Massachusetts. The strikers were successful but the organisations were short-lived, for the interest and patience needed in building up a strong organisation had not yet been developed among women workers.[2]

On the other hand, the development of the needle trades' unions, during the past twenty-five years, with women predominant figures in its history, bears witness to their more constructive contributions. The part which the women members played in the numerous strikes of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union is indeed one that some day will be the theme of a great epic of women's idealism and self-sacrifice in the economic field of battle.

One of the largest strikes of women in the United States was the remarkable "Uprising of the Twenty Thousand" shirtwaist makers of New York. "About 80 per cent of the workers in the trade were women; 75 per cent of the strikers were young women between

[2] Andrews and Bliss, *loc. cit.*, pp. 19-49.

the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. The workers complained of forewomen following a girl if she left the room and hurrying her back again; of the pay the new girls kept down because they did not know what the market rate was; of excessive fines; of frequent 'mistakes' in pay envelopes hard and embarrassing to rectify; of a system of registering on the time clock, that stole more than twenty minutes from the lunch hour; of the office clock covered so that the girls could not waste time looking at it, or put back an hour so that they should not know that they were working overtime." [3]

The women workers bore these indignities for years. Then the union started its organisation campaign, scattered thousands of circulars in Jewish, English and Italian, in the factory district, calling the workers to a great mass meeting to be held in Cooper Union on November 22nd, 1909. On the appointed evening, thousands of men and women came to Cooper Union—in fact, thousands were turned away to other halls. After two hours of speech-making, during which no decision to strike seemed forthcoming, it was a mere girl who "loaded the dice." [4]

Dr. Levine has described this incident so graphically in his book *The Women Garment Workers,* that we will let him tell the story:

"At Cooper Union, down in the body of the hall, arose a working girl, a 'wisp of a girl, still in her teens,'

[3] Louis Levine, *loc. cit.,* p. 145.
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 157.

and asked for the privilege of the floor. There was some grumbling, some commotion. But the chairman held that the girl was a striker and had to right to speak. The girl was Clara Lemlich, a striker from the shop of Leiserson, who had been on the picket line, and who had been assaulted while picketing. Making her way to the platform, she delivered a 'philippic' in Yiddish. 'I am a working girl, and one of those who are on strike against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers, who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether we shall or shall not strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared—now.' "

Instantly, in the words of the reporter, "the big gathering was on its feet, every one shouting an emphatic affirmative, waving hats, canes, handkerchiefs, anything that came handy; then the chairman, B. Feigenbaum, made himself heard, and asked for a seconder of the resolution. Again the big audience leaped to its feet, every one seconding. Carried off his feet by the emotional outburst, the chairman cried: 'Do you mean faith? Will you take the old Jewish oath?' And up came two thousand hands, with the prayer: 'If I turn traitor to the cause I now pledge, may this hand wither from the arm I now raise.' "

The strike which stirred the press and public-spirited citizens throughout the country, because of the courage and remarkable enthusiasm of the women strikers, was on. "There was Esther Lobetkin, a recent arrival from Russia. She was in charge of one of the shops.

Food or sleep did not seem to be a part of her daily needs. All day long she kept strict watch of her 'strikers,' and then she would appear at headquarters to report and to attend the meetings until the wee hours of the morning. A sandwich at midnight and a casual hour of rest kept her on her feet. She was arrested time and time again, and every time she would shout from the patrol wagon: 'Do not lose courage. We'll win yet!' And there were Bessie Switski, a member of the executive committee of Local 25, and her sister. Theirs was one of the hardest picketing jobs, in front of a shop, which was the storm centre of the strike. According to eye-witnesses, the private detectives and guards placed in front of that shop were exceptionally notorious. They were called the 'gorillas' and their faces were 'terrifying.' The young women of the shop were afraid to come near the place. But Bessie and her sister fought the 'gorillas' day after day, until the employer tired of it and came to terms with the union."

This was the spirit that pervaded the strike. Hardships, arrests, long hours of picketing, "gorillas," jail terms—all were faced by the women workers with an idealism and faith that few public causes have been able to command. Samuel Gompers summed up the strike in the 1910 convention report. "This strike," he said, "brought to the consciousness of the nation a recognition of certain features looming up in its social development. These are the extent to which women are taking up with industrial life, their conse-

quent tendency to stand together in the struggle to protect their common interests as wage-earners, the readiness of people in all classes to approve of trade union methods in behalf of working women, and the capacity of women as strikers to suffer, to do and to dare in support of their rights." [5]

In the report of the officials of international unions on the activity of women members, a number of interesting comments were made. Among them was one from the president of the United Brick and Clay Workers' Union, who stated that after a year of struggle and an expense of approximately $20,000, the effort to organise women workers in the stoneware industry was abandoned. "Perhaps the near future will give me an opportunity to write again on the woman worker, as a member of our organisation—*they make good fighters.*"

That women members make "good fighters" in time of strike seems to be the experience of most unions. That they make excellent pickets, self-sacrificing, enduring hardships with almost unbelievable fortitude has also been seen. That they refuse to act as strike-breakers in many instances is most notable, generalisations concerning the woman strike-breaker notwithstanding.

Recently, a strike was called in the hosiery mills of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The men were evicted from the company houses as a result, and the work was sent to other mills, where women were working at the same job for $1.25 per hundred dozen less than the men re-

[5] *Proceedings A. F. of L. Convention,* 1910.

ceived in Chattanooga. The women were informed that they were doing the work of the men of the striking hosiery mills for so much less. They immediately struck.[6]

It is not the purpose of this work to enumerate the virtues of the women unionists. There is no way of measuring strike or organisational activity except by citations of illustrative incidents. So if perchance this account reads like an unusual pæan of praise, let the reader remain assured that the writer is aware of the fact that women unionists have been strike-breakers, have shirked their duties as union members, have been lax in organisation work among their own fellow workers. But the characteristic of "slacker" is not a sex attribute.

Organisation Work. It is in straight organisation work that women trade unionists have been weak. In the house-to-house canvass, the weekly meetings, the shop propaganda, the participation in union meetings and conventions, and the self-assertion that comes with a self-confidence and self-respect, they have been found lacking. But even in this category there are exceptions. The Jewish women of the needle trades, coming from a politically revolutionary environment in Europe in which they participated, have contributed immeasurably to the progress and strength of the needle trades' unions of the United States. Another index of union activity is the extent to which women have been elected shop chairmen, local secretaries, or officers of the unions of which they are members.

[6] "Textile Worker," January, 1925.

Shop Chairladies. In many industries, each shop or factory forms a nucleus of the local union in the determination of prices, and the establishment of certain personal relations between employees, employers and the union. The shop steward or shop chairman is elected by the union members of the shop or factory to be the spokesman of the union in that particular factory or shop unit. This type of shop autonomy naturally exists in those industries lending themselves to that sort of organisation, such as the men's and women's clothing industries, the bookbinding industry, the meat-packing industry, etc. These industries are units of concentrated production with a more or less concentrated labour supply. The shop chairman is elected by the workers of the shop and becomes the spokesman for the workers in making prices, collecting union dues, settling shop disputes, making union announcements, and generally enforcing union rules. Often one factory has several shop chairmen, one for each craft or department.

This position in the needle trades' unions, particularly, has been considered an extremely important and difficult one. In these unions a large percentage of the members holding such positions are women. Even among union officials who are sparing in their praise of the women members, there is an extremely favourable attitude toward most of the shop chairladies. They have established a reputation for themselves of being conscientious in their efforts to defend the interests of the workers in the shop.

In a large Baltimore factory manufacturing men's

clothing, a little slip of a girl had been elected shop chairlady for several hundred men and women workers. Her job was actually that of a personnel manager, and her duties were so numerous that she remained in the shop receiving a salary from the union, but doing no actual productive work. Many of the reports of shops (in union journals) cite the grateful appreciation of the shop workers to the shop chairlady for "untiring activity in behalf of the workers."

Local Secretaries. Women union members may never become presidents of the union or be elected to equally honorary union positions, but as to electing a woman secretary of a local, the union membership of both men and women seem extremely open-minded. This job in most local unions entails more actual work than any other position. It is a job which is by no means spectacular. Sending out notices and answering correspondence, etc., can furnish no thrills, but it is certainly one of the most important jobs in the union structure. Women secretaries are to be found even in the locals of the unions most conservative as far as the status of the woman member is concerned.

The Tobacco Workers' Union, having about twenty-six locals, has seven locals with women secretaries. The Cigar Makers' Union which for years fought the admission of women, has six locals with women secretaries. The United Hatters of America, out of forty-one locals have ten women secretaries. The Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union has about forty-three women secretaries of locals. The Laundry Workers have forty-three women secretaries out of seventy-two

locals. The United Shoe Workers of America have eight women secretaries. The International Brotherhood of Paper Makers has four locals with women secretaries. The National Brotherhood of Pottery Operatives has four locals with women secretaries.

In unions where women are in greater predominance, there are naturally more women members assuming the responsibilities of secretaryship. The International Upholsterers' Union has five women's locals, completely officered by women. The Amalgamated Textile Workers of America had five locals with women secretaries. (This union was disbanded in 1922.) The United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' Union has six locals with women secretaries. The Glove Workers' Union, which is predominantly a woman's organisation, has four women secretaries out of eight locals.

The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union, despite the predominance of women membership, have few women officers. Though the shop chairladies in both these organisations play an important part, the locals representing a craft rather than a geographical branch of the union are almost entirely officered by men. Out of the 134 local unions, belonging to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, only three have women secretaries. The unions of professional workers, such as the American Federation of Teachers, the Actors' Equity, and the National Federation of Federal Employés, do not seem to have any greater proportion of women secretaries than the unions in industry, despite the supposedly better edu-

cated and more "public-accustomed" type of its woman membership.

Business Agents. The business agent of the union, the representative who "holds a pivotal place in the mechanism of the union," not only because he is the mediator between workers and employers, but also the agent of the union, transacting most of the "business" between the two groups, occupies a position fully as difficult and complicated as that of shop chairman. "His position is full of difficulties. The employers expect him to be amiable and reasonable. The workers want him to be aggressive and capable of 'delivering the goods.' The union relies on his tact and judgment to smooth out the rough edges of the everyday relations in the shops. A business agent may bring into a shop a breezy spirit of friendliness and good humour, or he may freeze the air into cold and stiff enmity. He may make the workers believe in his integrity and ability to get the best results for them or he may put a suspicion in their minds that he is shirking his job, and allowing the 'boss' to get the better of the bargain." [7]

This position requiring tact, sympathy, understanding and wit (not in the humorous sense, though a sense of humour is indeed an asset), has been most competently filled by the few women who have held such jobs. In many of the women's locals of the international unions, like the Bookbinders, Upholsterers and Glove Workers, the secretary is also the business agent. In unions where the business agent is appointed by the president of the union there are practically no

[7] Louis Levine, *loc. cit.*, p. 444.

women business agents. In the needle trades, women business agents are the exception rather than the rule. This is true not only of the outlying markets, such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago and Boston, but also of the chief centre of production, New York. It seems strange that women making good shop chairladies, and working without compensation, should not be qualified for positions of business agents, whose duties are similar to those of shop chairmen, and have a compensation attached to the job.

Women Organisers. The policy with reference to the employment of women organisers was reviewed in the discussion of the organisation policies of the international unions. Though from time to time the American Federation of Labor has engaged a woman organiser on its general staff of organisers, it has never been the policy of the organisation to engage a staff of women organisers, whose functions shall be that of organising women workers exclusively. There has never been a woman's department in the Federation, such as there was in the Knights of Labour.

Women organisers belong to the category of casual labourers in the American labour movement. Few unions have a woman on their permanent staff of organisers. Although sporadically, different unions start an organisation campaign among women workers and hire a woman organiser. The testimony of the Cigar Makers' Union to the effect that they had developed no woman to function as an organiser, is similar to the experiences of other unions. The Cigar Makers' Union, however, is prohibited from engaging organisers

outside of the trade, and men workers in shops are usually not interested in organising women workers. There are many so-called "union shops" and factories throughout the country employing women as helpers, apprentices, and in various other capacities, who are not organised, though the industry itself is considered a well-organised one. Some of the international unions have developed the policy of having the woman member of the Executive Board serve as the woman organiser of the union. This is true of the Glove Workers' Union, the Bookbinders, the National Federation of Federal Employés, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the Upholsterers' Union. Those unions employing women organisers more or less consistently are to be found mainly in the needle trades.

Women Officers and Leaders. The American labour movement has in the course of its history developed a few outstanding labour leaders. It is not necessary to decide here whether the job makes the leader or whether the leader makes the job. Whether Samuel Gompers made the American labour movement, or the American labour movement gave him the opportunity of becoming *the Samuel Gompers,* is indeed a moot question.

It is not strange, therefore, that there are few women labour leaders in the country. Since women unionists are given little opportunity to function in the movement, it is only at terrific personal cost that they can develop into union leaders. The Electrical Workers' Union has a definite constitutional clause prohibiting a woman from becoming president of a local having

men and women members, or securing any office in the international union. In this union the most aggressive and promising woman member is face to face with an unsurmountable bar. The majority of the other unions have no constitutional bar to the woman official, but they do have a tacit policy that a woman can never become president of the international union. The idea of women as presidents or officials of the trade union is about as remote as the idea is in the political world.

A number of unions have women members on their executive boards. The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor has never had a woman member. At the convention held in El Paso, Texas, in 1924, a resolution was introduced urging that at least one member of the Council be a woman. The resolution was defeated.

The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union each have one woman member on their Executive Boards. The National Federation of Federal Employés has two women on its Executive Board. The American Federation of Teachers has five women members on its Executive Board, and a woman president (1924). The Executive Board of the United Leather Workers' Union has one woman member. The Upholsterers' Union has two members. The International Brotherhood of Bookbinders has three women members. The National Association of Postal Clerks has one. The Glove Workers' Union has three or four women members. The Telephone Operators' Union, of course, has

its entire department officered by women. Its president is considered an *ex officio* member of the Executive Board of the Electrical Workers' Union. The women serving on Executive Boards are usually the outstanding women of the union. They are generally exceedingly active not only in union affairs but also in representing the unions in social and legislative undertakings.

Women on Wage Boards or Agreement Committees. The business of collective bargaining is probably one of the most important functions of the union. The representatives of organised labour meet the representatives of the employers and discuss the terms of employment, wages, hours, division of work, shop conditions, etc. The process has become a type of business negotiation demanding of the union representatives—acumen, shrewdness, and familiarity with the industry in general as well as with the immediate factory, shop or craft.

The principle of trade union control in an industry is the elimination of competition between individual workers, not only in making the terms of employment, but also in carrying out those terms. If Sadie G., a bookbinder, is hired by a printing establishment at wages which are lower than that received by the rest of the girls, the tendency is to draw down the wages of the rest of the girls to meet Sadie G.'s level. But if the union has an agreement with the establishment, it may permit Sadie G. to be engaged at lower wages for a specified period of time in a sort of apprenticeship capacity. Then it demands that her wages be auto-

matically increased to the level of prevailing union wages. The danger of individual competition and independent interpretation of the terms of employment is thus eliminated and submerged in the interests of the group. In so far as women workers are organised, they receive the benefits of collective bargaining and the trade agreement.

In the clothing industry, women are members of the price committees and participate in making agreements between the workers and the employers in a particular shop. This agreement is, of course, regulated by the general minimum wage rate and hours decided upon by the international union and the manufacturers' association. The scope of the agreement is limited to questions of division of work, price regulations upon specific garments, and general personnel problems. Very frequently the woman organiser in an out-of-town market will be given the privilege of making agreements in co-operation with the general office of the international union. On the other hand, the agreements made in a large market between the union and the manufacturers' association are rarely made by women members of the union. This is due to the fact that the officials of the union and a picked committee from the executive board of the union usually carry on the negotiations. Since there is but one woman member on the executive boards of the various clothing unions, the most important agreements are made by the men.

The tendency in the clothing industry seems to be for women to participate in making local agreements for the shop or even for a small local community, but

they have no share in the formulation of agreements on a larger scale between the manufacturers' association of a clothing market and the international unions.

The policy in the printing industry, as evinced by the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders and the International Typographical Union, seems to be similar to that of the clothing industry, as far as women's participation in wage agreements is concerned. The president or secretary of the women's local of bookbinders is empowered with the right of making local agreements in line with the general policy of the international union. In a particular printing market, however, the officials of the international union and the officials of the local union carry on the negotiations for the agreement. Here again, since most of the officials are men, the women do not participate.

In the boot and shoe industry, most of the local, as well as the market, agreements, are made by the men officials of the union. This is also the prevailing situation in the tobacco, food, and the paper and pulp industries. In the unions concerning public utilities, like the Postal Clerks, the Teachers' Union and the National Federation of Federal Employés, no wage agreements are made. In the Telephone Operators' and Glove Workers' Unions, wage agreements are made by women officials.

On the whole, the trend of participation of women trade unionists in the actual function of collective bargaining is limited by their restricted union activity. In the clothing workers' unions the scope of women's activities in the formulation of agreements is limited to

local shops and factories where the representative of the union directly meets the manufacturer and employer, where the number of workers involved in the agreement is small, and the stakes, as far as the general clothing market is concerned, are not high. When the responsibility becomes greater, the number of workers involved, large, and the problems of control of the industry, more complicated, the work is carried on by the more experienced men trade unionists. In unions where women are not so important a factor in membership, practically the same trend is to be found.

This phase of union activity truly reflects the social and political world. Women are entrusted with the functions of political citizenship, but are slow to achieve the responsibilities of legislative, judicial or executive power. The function of collective bargaining in the trade union combines all of these powers. The woman trade unionist has taken the first step, but has gone very little farther on the road towards trade union citizenship.

Union Funds. Since dues determine the size of the treasury of the union, let us consider women unionists first as dues-paying members. In a previous chapter we described the policies of most unions in offering a lower rate of dues, sick and death benefits, and strike benefits to women members than to men. The reasons for this policy have been the need for a special inducement to recruit women workers into the union, and the recognition of the fact that the wages of women workers are less than the men's, and that, therefore, women members of the union cannot afford to pay as high

dues. The result of this policy has been twofold: first, a failure on the part of trade unions to increase the wages of women workers to a level of equality, even in those industries where women perform the same jobs as do men; and secondly, a reinforcement of the social conditions which were responsible for the special policy in the first pace. Again the old story of the dog chasing his tail!

Practically every union has a special clause stating that no member may be in arrears with his or her dues for more than a specified period of time. This means that most women members are compelled to pay their dues on time. Local union secretaries have made interesting observation in the matter of the promptness of dues-payment. In a number of locals of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, it has been observed that men will pay their dues several months in advance in order to avoid the trouble of visiting the local headquarters each month. Women members rarely do this, either because they are more completely dependent upon their weekly wages and budget more or less carefully, or because the process of paying dues is in itself a painful one to which they have not yet become completely surrendered. As one union member put it, "Money comes so hard to us that we don't like to give it away for advantages we can't see immediately."

Because unions have failed to keep statistics, it has been impossible to determine the extent to which women members have taken advantage of the sick benefits. However, the common impression among secretaries of

locals of the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union, the Bindery Workers' Union, and various locals of the needle trades' union seems to be that proportionately fewer women than men ask for sick benefit. They attribute this situation to the fact that women members who are ill do not like "to be investigated" by the union officials, a procedure which is generally required before sick benefit is granted. Even though the investigating committee is made up of women, the sensitive pride of the average woman militates against investigation, unless, of course, there is the pressure of great poverty. It is the opinion of local secretaries that though the extent of illness among women is greater than among men, the amount expended in sick benefits is proportionately less, partly because few unions grant women the same amount, and partly because fewer women apply for them.

Those unions specifying that no woman member may receive sick benefit for any illness connected with "natural causes," such as menstruation or menopause, have developed this policy ostensibly as a safeguard to the treasury funds. As a matter of fact it is inserted in the constitution in the same manner in which the clause ruling against venereal disease as an illness to be compensated by sick benefits has been inserted in some union constitutions.

The death benefits for women members are in proportion to the dues paid. Here again, no statistics are available, but it is common knowledge that fewer death benefits are given to women members than to men. Not because women members do not die! But the

length of union membership of women members is generally shorter than that of men, though this varies with the industry. In the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders, the woman members leave the trade more frequently than the men. In the last ten years, however, a greater proportion of married women have been coming back to the trade, resuming their membership in the union. Upon reinstatement they are entitled to the various union benefits. In the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, there has been a complete turnover of women membership every five years. This seems to indicate that few women workers are members of the union, or even working in the industry, when they die of old age, or because of illness brought about by the complexities of middle age.

The number of deaths of women in industry, due to accidents or dangerous hazards are few. Most states have laws prohibiting women from working at dangerous occupations. The Telephone Operators' Union has recently been considering increasing the amount of its death benefit. It found that, because of the comparative youth of its members, and the safety of their occupation, it averaged only one or two deaths a year. Judging from the statements of union officials, it would seem that the sick and death incidence of women members makes comparatively little inroad upon the treasuries of the various unions.

Several local unions have established the custom of granting a dowry to a girl who marries and leaves the trade. This was originally planned as an inducement

to the woman worker to join the union. With the decreasing popularity of the dowry and the increasing economic independence of the woman worker, this custom seems to be fast disappearing.

CHAPTER VII

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

A FOURTH important factor in trade union activity is *idealism.* A union membership, a treasury, a leadership, may all be present but if there is no idealism, no faith, no concept of the spiritual significance of the union, as well as the economic, the union becomes a business institution supporting a salaried officialdom. Like most social institutions it contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. A union can be effective only as long as it holds the faith of its membership.

It is undoubtedly true that the decline in membership in the American trade unions since the war besides being the result of the business depression—the aftermath of the war—was also due to a spiritual bankruptcy within the trade union movement itself. The trade union movement, like many other social institutions, reflected the spiritual change of the world, following the disillusionment of a war ostensibly fought for "ideals." The post-war years revealed the imperialistic nature of those "ideals" but this fact did not make the decline in union membership any the less real.

The dissatisfaction which the rank and file of the large trade unions have expressed toward their leaders, cannot be entirely attributed to "Bolshevist" propa-

ganda. The history of the American labour movement is dotted with periodic protests against the philosophy and policies of leaders who have lost contact with the workers they lead, or who have failed to brandish the burning symbol of some ideal to which they can cling. The psychologist will understand this demand for ideals by the workers in addition to definite economic results of higher wages and shorter work-hours. The demand for shibboleths of some sort seems to be an inherent characteristic of man in every civilisation. Certainly the worker, who has little time or inclination to determine satisfactorily for himself "his place in the sun," is apt to need new suns to keep him going!

What have women workers contributed to this vague factor known as *idealism?* It is generally said that women are more *idealistic* than men, that they are more conscientious in their work, more rigid in their concepts of right and wrong, and more apt to be loyal to the "hand that feeds them," than are men. It is difficult to argue for or against generalisations. They are based on individual experiences and therefore contain the modicum of truth necessary to convert a generalisation into a reality. On the other hand idealism cannot be measured quantitatively. In an organised group of workers like the trade union, one can but gather up the experiences of individuals, study the movements other than the purely economic, which have developed, and set them forth as the spiritual contributions of the labour movement.

In this light women union members in addition to being good fighters and excellent pickets, have

been responsible for a number of concrete and successful undertakings of an idealistic nature. From the time the Troy Laundry Workers' Union started a co-operative collar and cuff laundry, after their long and unsuccessful strike in 1848, the women's unions of the past and the women membership of the large unions of to-day have been largely responsible for a phase of the trade union life which would satisfy the needs of their "soul" as well as their "body." These contributions have been in the form of experiments in sanitation, education, recreation and co-operation, particularly.

Sanitation

Tradition tells us that one of women's jobs is "keeping house." It was natural, therefore, for the woman worker to take with her into industrial life the subjective point of view that is developed in the occupational isolation of "keeping house." The attitude of the woman worker to her work-place has been, more or less, a personal one. It explains the preference of girls to work in factories where they can feel at home, sing at their work, talk to their neighbours, and keep a flower pot in the window, rather than work in a highly routinised factory at slightly higher wages. It explains the finicky attitude of women workers towards clean work-places. Some of the early strikes in the Lowell textile mills were caused by the unheeded protests of the women cotton mill operatives against the bad sanitary conditions in the mills and the boarding houses operated by the mill owners. The early reports of a

number of the local unions in the boot and shoe industry, the hotel and restaurant, the textile and the printing industries contain complaints of women members against the sanitation or lack of sanitary facilities in the work-place.

The subject of sanitation or hygiene in industry has become the subject of legislative activity throughout the country. Women's organisations representing women of every walk in life, threw themselves into the legislative campaign against sweat-shops and home-work some fifteen or twenty years ago. In the clothing industry this campaign was most intense because of the fact that the larger part of the industry was carried on in sweat-shops and small factories. Women members of the Consumers' League boycotted the sweat-shop-made garments and pledged themselves to wear clothes bearing the "White Label," a guarantee that the clothes were made in sanitary factories.

The general strike of 1910 in New York City in the women's garment industry was responsible for a flood of publicity on the unsanitary conditions in the trade and the physical hardships which the working-girls had to undergo. So harassing was this publicity that the Cloak and Suit Manufacturers' Protective Association, through their representative, Julius H. Cohen, crystallised the idea of standardising sanitary conditions by the organisation of a Joint Board of Sanitary Control, which would fix standards of sanitation that both manufacturers and unions would maintain. This was the first voluntary experiment of its kind in any industry in the country. The Board, though it contains but

one woman member (Lillian D. Wald, representative of the public) has depended upon men and women factory inspectors and men and women members of sanitation committees in the shops for its success.[1]

The first survey of the industry indicated that "the chief menace to the lives and health of the workers lay in the following conditions: inadequacy of protection against fire dangers; lack of sanitary care as shown by dirty floors, ceilings, walls, water-closets, defective plumbing; lack of sanitary necessities, such as inadequate water-closets, receptacles for rubbish, lack of adequate ventilation, overcrowding, and the pollution of the air by the use of coal and gas irons; strain upon the eyesight due to inadequate lighting, and certain harmful effects of the work itself."[2] These are the conditions which the Joint Board of Sanitary Control has undertaken to check and has partially eliminated in its fifteen years of existence.

As an outgrowth of the Joint Board of Sanitary Control came the Union Health Center of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union—a health centre for the members of the Union. This was established in 1919 by nine locals of the Union under the directorship of Dr. George M. Price, director of the Joint Board of Sanitary Control.

The sanitary and health improvements which a union is able to effect in an industry depends upon the strength and vision of the union. The need for clean windows, proper seating, or the elimination of occu-

[1] Louis Levine, *loc. cit.*, pp. 466-467.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 468.

pational hazards, may be obvious to the hygienist, but real initiative on the part of the workers is required to make such demands upon their employers in addition to the usual economic demands. Sanitation strikes and legislative campaigns for legal precautions against occupational diseases and hazards, have been two methods which trade unions have used to improve the sanitary conditions of work-places. The persistent and almost nagging demands of women workers for sanitary work-places, have been responsible for many reforms in the industries where women predominate.

Education

When the Lowell Female Labour Reform Association was organised in 1846, it initiated two things for which it will be long remembered. One was the establishment of the working women's paper, *The Lowell Offering,* edited and published by the women mill operatives of Lowell. The second was the establishment of the Industrial Reform Lyceum, a public forum, to which speakers on labour and social topics were invited. In connection with this forum, an educational committee was appointed to start a library for the "industrial classes." The association was most active in holding periodic public meetings and organising social gatherings among the women workers, to interest them in the questions of social reform and industrial conditions.

In 1850, the Industrial Union of Philadelphia, an organisation of tailoresses, started a series of lectures on

the labour question in order to interest and educate their women members. These educational classes may well be classified as the first experiments in workers' education in the United States.

In 1880 and 1890, the influx of socialists into the labour movement was responsible for the introduction of regular classes in economics, socialism and labour problems in the trade unions. In 1913, the women's local of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, aroused by its women membership to the necessity of providing for the "intellectual" and "emotional" life of its members, started a number of educational and recreational activities. These developed into the extensive Educational Department of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. The women particularly stressed the necessity of education in organisation and education of a more intensive sort than the propaganda lectures which were heard at the mass meetings.[3]

In 1915 this same women's local appointed an educational committee which arranged for a course of weekly lectures and concerts for its membership. An educational director was appointed to plan the educational activities. These were combined with plans for recreational activities. The educational work carried on in the neighbourhood public schools, included courses in physical training as well as English. The success of the educational experiment in this one local was soon followed by other locals of the union. The 1916 Convention of the International Ladies' Garment

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 487.

Workers' Union provided for the appointment of an Educational Committee to organise educational activities for the entire union. An Educational Director was appointed by this committee, and an appropriation of $5,000 was made, to carry on the work.

The educational programme consists of courses in literature, economics, trade unionism, psychology, American history and labour problems. It is of interest to note that the greatest proportion of women attend the literature and psychology classes. In classes in economics, labour problems and trade unionism, there is an equal proportion of men and women. Educational work of this type has also been carried on in other industrial markets. In 1917, the United Cloth Cap and Hat Makers' Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union—both unions with a large women membership—started classes for their members. The first resident Workers' College in the United States, known as the Brookwood Labour College at Katonah, New York, has had to adopt a policy of limiting its membership to men and women unionists in equal proportion, because the early experience of the school indicated that a greater number of applications for admission were received from women than from men. The National Women's Trade Union League has had an educational department for a number of years and has trained its women organisers in its own classes.

Though few of the international unions in other industries have adopted an educational programme, nevertheless the establishment of local labour colleges and workers' classes in almost every large industrial com-

munity offers an opportunity for education to men and women members. Some of these classes, composed entirely of men, have balked at the admission of women into their study group. And often the women trade unionists have refused to join a workers' class "because there were so many men." On the whole, the extent of participation in educational work of the women members of the union is extraordinary, considering their limited activity in actual union business.

It is in these workers' classes that the education of trade union men and women away from the obstacles and traditions of the past is possible.

Recreation

The social activities which formed an important factor in organisation work among women is also a manifestation of a real contribution to the social side of the labour movement. Hikes, outdoor festivals, picnics, concerts, theatre benefits and physical training courses are only a few of the recreational activities which women have assiduously worked for. All the humdrum, monotonous work of selling tickets, decorating halls for balls, preparing sandwiches and drinks for union parties have been the special jobs of women members of the union.

They are not contributions to trade union policy, they do not directly determine the wage rates, but they represent an expenditure of time and energy, strength and patience which can never be measured in terms of economic values. Not that men unionists do not per-

form these tasks of "union life." They do. In most unions of mixed membership, however, this is a phase of unrewarded and unsung union work which is invariably done by women members.

It was Local 25, too, of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, that was responsible for the establishment of a summer vacation centre, furnishing a means of recreation for its members. A large camp, including 750 acres of woodland and hills, and a 70-acre lake, was purchased by this local and conducted for the benefit of all the members of the union. This beautiful summer resort at Forest Park, Pennsylvania, has recently been taken over by the International Union itself for the benefit of all the members. The New York Italian local of this Union has also bought a summer resort for its members, and local unions in Philadelphia and Cleveland are contemplating furnishing similar recreational opportunities for their members.

Many of the unions in the needle trades have recognised the importance of recreational activities as a medium for organisation work, and have arranged hikes, picnics, boat rides, camping clubs and all sorts of indoor recreational activities. This feature constitutes another phase of the social aspect of the trade union to which women members have not only contributed, but for which they have in a large measure been responsible.

Co-operation and Other Activities

Many of the women's locals have, from time to time,

undertaken co-operative enterprises from idealistic as well as practical motives. The shirt-waist makers of New York City, in 1850, started a co-operative factory after they had lost a strike in the factory which employed them. The Umbrella Workers of New York also carried on experiments along these lines in an attempt to share the profits of the industry. The Knights of Labour sponsored co-operative experiments among its membership as a possible way of increasing the wages of the workers.

In 1886, the Richmond, Virginia, assembly of the Knights of Labour started a co-operative underwear factory for the benefit of the "female members of the order." In that same year a few girls were locked out of a tailor shop in Chicago for taking part in a labour day parade. They were blacklisted and decided to start "Our Girls' Co-operative Manufacturing Company" to keep from starving.[4] Co-operative shirt factories in Baltimore and New York, co-operative knitting mills in Little Falls, and collar and cuff factories in Waterford, New York, were conducted solely by women workers.

Many of these co-operative experiments were successfully carried on for several years.

The history of the modern labour movement is dotted with co-operative experiments. In these experiments, such as the co-operative factory started by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union in New York City in the period of the industrial depression in 1920,

[4] David J. Saposs, *Co-operation and the Knights of Labour* (unpublished manuscript).

the women members of the union participated. Many of them, the women themselves initiated.

It would seem that there is no movement of a social nature to which women members have not been active contributors. Relief to Soviet Russia, aid to the striking miners, aid to Irish famine victims have all been causes which, in the last few years, have called forth the ready sympathy and help of women as well as men trade unionists. In the more strictly economic fields of labour banking and unemployment insurance the women members have not participated as initiators, though they have performed the necessary routine work. These fields, of course, are the more recent economic developments of the labour movement and have been initiated and managed primarily by the officials of the unions.

In the political field women unionists have been active both in propaganda work and in running for political offices.

Again, in the recent mingled economic and political struggles between Communists and Socialists, or "lefts" and "rights" in the unions of the needle trades, the women have been most active on both sides and have contributed to the battles of words and ideas which have taken place at union meetings.

Truly, there are few trade union activities in which women members do not participate. In social activities, and in certain economic activities, they are more active than in others. Much of this differentiation is due to the usual customs and traditions surrounding women, or to the fact that certain activities are ini-

tiated by officials of the union who, as we have seen, are for the most part men.

When the Barbers' Union was considering the admission of women members to their fold, the question arose whether women members would not weaken the strength of the union. It was declared, for instance, that often in times of strike, intimidating organisation tactics were necessary in which "ladies" could not be expected to participate. Furthermore they were like a lot of "sheep" in trade union politics—"whichever was the best-looking candidate would get the women members' votes."[5] These arguments have been heard in the political world before and since suffrage was granted to women. It would seem foolish to regard them seriously. They are undoubtedly the factors which must be encountered and contended with in every human institution.

To conclude a description of the assets of women trade unionists without mentioning the contributions of the thousands of "unknown and unsung" women in the trade union family would be ungrateful indeed. When the average worker marries, he marries a woman of his own class—one who has probably worked in industry herself. The extent to which this worker participates in union activity, and incidentally, the strength of the local union, depend upon the co-operation and understanding of the woman in the home. Strikes have been won that never would have been won without the co-operation of the trade unionist's family.

[5] *Proceedings Journeyman Barbers' International Union,* 1924, pp. 149-175.

Very often men have been organised by the use of the "back-yard" method of persuasion.

Many unions have recognised the importance of having the woman in the home "on their side." In the great steel strike of 1919, a number of women organisers were employed to organise the "women folk" of the strikers. Mass meetings were held and house-to-house visits were made to arouse the enthusiasm and interest of the women. That picturesque figure, veteran woman organiser of the United States, "Mother" Jones, travelled from strike zone to strike zone, speaking, exhorting and "enthusing" her audiences. Mrs. Fannie Snellins, another woman organiser, employed by the United Mine Workers of America, was killed by the bullets of the State Constabulary as she walked from house to house in the anti-union Black Valley district, organising and encouraging the wives of the strikers.[6]

A vast food commissary system was set up during this strike in forty-five local strike zones. The officials of the National Committee were responsible for the enactment of this great piece of strike strategy, but had it not been for the co-operation and activity of the women in the strike areas, the system would not have been so effective.

Recently the Amalgamated Clothing Workers concluded victoriously a nineteen weeks' strike against a large clothing manufacturing firm. An editorial in their journal indicates an appreciation of the contribution which the women in the home made to the victory.

[6] W. Z. Foster, *loc. cit.*, pp. 146-7.

"The men strikers," it said, "cannot live by strike speeches alone. Their fighting virility must have more support than what comes through drawing union benefits. Between the hour the striker leaves the strike hall and when he appears on the picket line, lie a stretch of hours which he spends at home with his people. There he either meets with encouragement and sets out early in the morning, encouraged, inspired; or, he is compelled to fight another battle at his home, meeting with disapproval, perhaps with reproaches for failing to supply enough to keep his home people in comfort. There at home is the second line of war." [7]

The courage and sacrifice of these women in trade union families will be the theme of a real epic sometime in the future. It will include the story of how the State Constabulary of Pennsylvania raided the homes of steel strikers in 1919, arrested the men and beat up

It will tell the story of the 1924 strike of the coal miners of West Virginia, when hundreds of families were evicted from company-owned houses, and bravely faced the hardships of winter in tents and rude shacks, in order that the strike might not be completely lost.

It will tell the story of the food commissaries which the Women's Auxiliary to the Machinists' Union organised during the 1922 shopmen's strike, in order to help the families of those strikers who could not continue to carry the brunt of unemployment. It will tell how the same Women's Auxiliary raised something like $50,000 to help the families of striking shopmen, and the protesting women.

[7] "Advance," November 13, 1925.

how the money was raised by parties, socials, raffles and all sorts of schemes peculiar to the feminine psychology.

All of these facts will be related in the story of the contributions of women in the trade union family, to say nothing of the work which these women have carried on in supporting the union label, in assisting in the boycott of industries unfair to union labour, and in actually organising women workers. One might sentimentalise about the fine spirit of idealism which women in the home have been responsible for in the American labour movement.

To return to the woman trade unionist!

Liabilities

There are characteristics which many women trade unionists have that handicap their progress within the labour movement. There is the absence of sex solidarity which makes it impossible for the women members of a local union to agree upon a woman candidate for some union office. This may be due to lack of confidence in the sex, or to a jealousy of the potential candidate. Whatever the reasons may be, the fact is that in most unions having a predominant women membership, the women themselves are responsible for the scarcity of women officials.

There is, again, the undue sensitiveness of women members to slights, insults, or harsh words from the male officers or rank and file members. The demand for chivalry in the economic field, where the competi-

tive struggle is most intense, and the demand for equality between the sexes most vociferously called for by the women, is a contradiction still to be overcome. The case of the woman boot and shoe worker who left the union because she hated the union secretary and "just couldn't stand him" is not unusual. The injection of personal or subjective attitudes in economic institutions has its handicaps as well as its advantages.

The attitude of women trade unionists towards their fellow-workers, towards their work-place, and towards their union is coloured by this subjective tone. Essentially, it must be remembered that the woman trade unionist is first a woman, and then a trade unionist. Secondly, it must be remembered that women workers are individuals, and that many things have been described in this chapter which apply to some women and not to others and which are by no means the exclusive traits of the women.

CHAPTER VIII

A SUMMARY

When all is said, we have merely touched upon the fringe of the innumerable questions surrounding the organisation of the women. To do the subject adequate justice, a mass of factual material on union membership, union wages, and union policies, as they refer to women members, should be gathered. But such material is not readily available to-day. The archives of the ordinary trade union do not specialise in "statistics."

On the other hand, we have tried to outline the problems as they are, and as we see them. In the introductory chapter, we traced the influence of tradition and racial environment upon the psychology of the woman worker. These influences have definitely limited woman's economic position and forced her to become an economic competitor of man.

To realise that society has for centuries perpetuated customs, traditions and laws which have not only shaped human institutions but also human bodies, is to repeat the old tale of the monster Frankenstein that would strangle its creator. Women have been practically destroyed in the past, both physically and spiritually, by those very institutions which they in part created.

The second chapter is an analysis of the economic and social conditions in which working women find themselves to-day, because of the influences of yesterday. Modern industry, with its machine technique, its demand for cheap labour, its motives of profit-making, has been coupled with the traditions and customs surrounding women. The result is a pretty anachronism indeed. Women workers receive extremely low wages, but are expected to look "respectable and nice," to be efficient producers, and not to rebel. Women are compelled to work to earn their livelihood, but society claims for them "that they are only working for pin-money." Women are becoming a permanent factor in the labour supply of the country, but society still considers them an industrial liability. Society does not "want" women to work, but they are being drawn into industry just the same.

The contradiction is observed in the third chapter where the trade union, the economic weapon of all workers, is found to be masculine in sex. In 1926, a number of unions in the American labour movement still retained in their constitutions their endorsement of the traditions of centuries. The constitutions of these unions not only specify the occupations to which women shall be limited, but also specify lower dues, lower benefits, etc., because many union officials still believe women will *always* receive lower wages, will always be a temporary factor in industry.

The fourth chapter deals with the question of whether working women can be organised. Organisability is discussed in terms of a permanent wage-earning

group, the nature of the occupation, the tactics or methods of organisation, and the psychology of the groups to be organised.

In a recent editorial in the "American Federationist," (June, 1925), William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, pointed out the need of trade union self-analysis. "The trade union, like every human institution, must periodically review its achievements, re-examine its problems, and refocus its plans." A change of focus will have to be made in the plans of organising women workers. The old mental attitudes about the impermanency of women in industry, or their inability to do so-called "man's work" must change, in the face of the inroads of specialisation and the continued increase in the number of women in industry.

The last three chapters give a description of how the women members of unions actually function in union activity. Their participation in union politics and union policies forms only one phase of their activity. Different unions tell different stories as to the extent of the women's activity. Certain racial groups are more actively aggressive in trade union life than others. A perusal of the activities of the women members in the trade union should convince the trade unionist that there are many sides to the problem of organising women.

The cry of the union official that "we spent $20,000 in organising women—we got them into the union, but couldn't hold on to them," is worthy of attention. It has been the cry of the entire labour movement for the past twenty-five years or more. It indicates one of

two things—either the women workers cannot be organised, or the methods of organisation are wrong. A labour leader once said, "Any worker can be organised into trade unions if there is persistent and sincere purpose in the organiser. The grievances of low wages, long hours, and dissatisfaction with life are ever present."

This situation is as true of women workers as of men. It would seem, therefore, that the touchstone of successful organisation among women workers would be the use of the "refocused plans" which President Green voiced, plus a knowledge of the problems which women in industry must face.

Organisation is not easy. Overcoming mental prejudices is still less easy. The increasing number of women in industry and the intensification of economic competition between the sexes can only be controlled and guided. The most efficacious method of control for working men and working women is the union. Verily, it would seem that the American labour movement must become aware of the situation, slough off its traditions and prejudices, and say to the world: "Women can be organised!"

THE END

APPENDIX

TABLE I.

EXTENT OF THE ORGANISATION OF WOMEN WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Industry and Trade Union	*Number of Women Members*			*No. of Women Wage-Earners According to 1920 Census*
	1910 [1]	1920 [1]	1924 [2]	
Extraction of Minerals:				2,674
United Mine Workers				
Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers				
Quarry Workers				
Oil and Gas Well Workers				
Clay, Glass and Stone:			780	17,586
Flint Glass Workers			30	
Glass Bottle Blowers			250	
Potters	98	1,500	500	
Clothing:			122,461	368,508
Cloth Hat and Cap Makers	159	2,400	2,000	
Amalgamated Clothing Workers		66,100	50,000	
United Garment Workers.	19,433	31,100	29,560	
United Hatters		2,000	1,476	
Glove Workers	365	600	300	
Ladies' Garment Workers	11,122	65,300	34,125	
Journeyman Tailors	730	1,900	2,000	
Fur Workers		3,300	3,000	
Food and Kindred Products:			850	93,140
Bakery Workers			400	
Brewery Workers	587	200	400	
Amalgamated Meat Cutters		5,200	50	
Iron and Steel:			115	72,218
Iron, Steel and Tin Workers				
Machinists		500	100	
Foundry Employees			15	
Leather:			9,553	89,396
Boot and Shoe Workers	5,200	14,000	9,300	
Elastic Goring Weavers			3	
Leather Workers		2,900	50	
Fancy Leather Goods Workers		200	200	
United Shoe Workers	300	13,000		
Protective Shoe Workers		8,000		
Travelers' Goods	23			
Lumber and Furniture:			2,021	32,265
Piano and Organ Workers			15	
Upholsterers			2,000	
Painters and Decorators			6	
Metals:			129	70,395
Sheet Metal Workers			100	
Diamond Workers			6	
Metal Polishers			23	

TABLE I (continued)

Industry and Trade Union	*Number of Women Members*			*No. of Women Wage-Earners According to 1920 Census*
	1910 [1]	1920 [1]	1924 [2]	
Paper and Pulp:			1,000	39,569
Pulp and Paper Mill Workers	250	500	500	
Paper Makers	21		500	
Printing:			7,603	47,576
Bookbinders	3,651	8,400	5,500	
Photo Engravers	3		2	
Typographical Union	592	2,000	2,100	
Steel Plate Engravers			1	
Printing Pressmen	1,443	1,500	1,000	
Textiles:			20,000	471,466
Lace Operators				
Silk Workers				
Amalgamated Textile Workers		1,500		
United Textile Workers	5,865	39,000	20,000	
Cloth Weavers	2,500			
Carders	441			
Cigar and Tobacco:			3,140	97,822
Cigar Makers	3,798	6,700	2,000	
Tobacco Workers	2,364	6,500	1,140	
Telephone and Telegraph:			3,390	196,171
Commercial Telegraphers			390	
Electrical Workers		11,600	1,200	
R. R. Telegraphers	960	2,200	2,000	
Transportation:			1,000	211,651
Street Railway Employees			1,000	
Trade:			2,000	556,671
Retail Clerks	2,100	2,900	2,000	
Professional Service:			7,400	1,016,498
Actors	2,000	3,900	3,900	
Musicians	3,850	2,600	1,000	
Teachers		5,200	2,500	
Vaudeville Artists		3,500		
Musical and Theatrical Workers	150			
Domestic and Personal Service:			9,000	1,935,510
Hotel Employees	1,952	5,400	4,000	
Laundry Workers		6,200	5,000	
Clerical:			14,920	1,410,265
Post Office Clerks		3,000	1,500	
Railway Clerks		33,000	4,420	
Federal Employees			9,000	
United Post Office Clerks		2,600		
Miscellaneous:			15	2,780
Broom and Brush Workers				
Broom and Whisk Makers			15	
Totals			[3] 206,577	

[1] Leo Wolman, *Growth of Trade Unionism.*
[2] Research Department, American Federation of Labor.
[3] This total does not include women organised in independent unions.

TABLE II

Policy of Trade Unions with Reference to Women Members

Industry and Trade	*Constitutional References to Women Members with Regard to*		
	Special Dues	*Initiation Fees*	*Sick and Death Benefits*
Extraction of Minerals:			
United Mine Workers		No special provisions.	
Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers		" " "	
Quarry Workers		" " "	
Oil and Gas Well Workers		" " "	
		" " "	
Mfg. Clay, Glass and Stone:	Special apprenticeship period 3½ years for girls working in lamp department. At end of apprenticeship, receive same wages as journeymen.		
Flint Glass Workers		No special provisions.	
Glass Bottle Blowers	Dues 1% weekly earnings for both sexes.	Initiation fee, same for male and female receiving same compensation. Where females receive less than male, initiation fee half. Reinstatement fee for suspended members $5, male and female. Females receiving less than males, one-third less than recorded fee.	
Bro. Operative Potteries			
Clothing:			
Cloth Hat and Cap Makers		No special provisions.	
Amalgamated Clothing		Initiation fee, 75c. women, $1 male per month.	
United Garment Workers		No special provisions.	
United Hatters		" " "	
Glove Workers		" " "	
Ladies' Garment Workers		" " "	
Journeyman Tailors	Apprentice, male and female, per capita tax, 55c.	Initiation fee, $5 for tailors, $3 for helpers. Women limited to craft of helpers.	Females not entitled to sick or death benefits.
Fur Workers		No special provisions.	

TABLE II (continued)

Industry and Trade	*Constitutional References to Women Members with Regard to*		
	Special Dues	*Initiation Fees*	*Sick and Death Benefits*
Food and Kindred Products:			
Bakery Workers	Dues, male, $1.90 per mo. Female, $1.25.		Female members of auxiliaries exempt from assessment. Not entitled to beneficiary membership.
Brewery Workers		No special provisions.	
Amalgamated Meat Cutters		" " "	
Iron and Steel:			
Iron, Steel and Tin Workers		No special provisions.	
Machinists		" " "	
Foundry Employees		" " "	
Leather:			
Shoe Workers, United		No special provisions.	
Boot and Shoe Workers			Sick benefit 9,300 female members not entitled to benefits while pregnant and not for 5 weeks after confinement. Female members passing through menopause allowed only half benefits.
Elastic Goring Weavers		" " "	
United Leather Workers		" " "	
Fancy Leather Goods Workers		" " "	
Protective Shoe Workers		" " "	
Lumber and Furniture:			
Piano and Organ Workers		Initiation fee, female half that of male, weekly dues half that of regular dues. Assessments half that of regular assessments.	Sick benefit half that of regular benefit, except during pregnancy and during 6 weeks after confinement. No sick benefit paid for sickness due to or resulting from pregnancy.

TABLE II (continued)

Industry and Trade	*Constitutional References to Women Members with Regard to*		
	Special Dues	*Initiation Fees*	*Sick and Death Benefits*
Upholsterers	Dues $1.50 male. $1 apprentice and female per mo.	Initiation fee, $3 male, not less than $2 apprentice and female members.	Strike benefits, $7 male, $5 week to apprentice and female.
United Wall Paper Crafts	No woman can be admitted to membership without special constitutional provision being made.		
Painters, Decorators and Paper Hangers	Women shall be organised in Ladies Auxiliaries receiving charter from general Executive Board.		
Metal Ind., except Iron and Steel:			
Sheet Metal Workers		Lower per capital tax for women.	
Diamond Workers		No special provisions.	
Metal Polishers	Dues for women members $1 per month. Per capita tax for women to international union, 65c., $1.10 for men.		
Paper and Pulp:			
Pulp and Paper Mill Workers	Male, 60c. mo. Female 40c.	Initiation fee same for both.	
	Executive Board shall use all means practicable to better conditions of the female members of the various locals. Whenever women are employed on jobs formerly occupied by men they shall receive the same rate of wages and must pay the same monthly dues to their local organisations as the men members; and local organisation in turn shall pay to international headquarters 60c. per capita tax for all women working on men's jobs and receiving the scheduled rate of wages.		
Paper Makers	All ladies are allowed to become active members of their respective unions.		
	Per capita tax 90c. for male, 50c. female.	Initiation fee to be not less than $1.50. Initiation fee for female help half that of male.	
	Strike assessments, 35c. per mo. for male, 20c. for female.		

TABLE II (continued)

Industry and Trade	Constitutional References to Women Members with Regard to: Special Dues	Initiation Fees	Sick and Death Benefits
Printing:			
Bookbinders	Dues 65c. per mo. male, 30c. per mo. female.	Special initiation fee for women's locals.	
Lithographers		No special provisions.	
Photo Engravers	$1 mo. for male, 25c. mo. for women apprentices. Women apprentices eligible to full membership at end of 5 years.		
Typographical Union		" " "	
Steel Plate Engravers		" " "	
Textile:			
Lace Operators		No special provisions.	
Silk Workers		" " "	
Amalgamated Textile Workers (Disbanded)		" " "	
United Textile Workers		" " "	
Cigar and Tobacco:			
Cigar Makers			Not entitled to sick benefit 3 weeks before or 5 weeks after confinement.
Tobacco Workers		No special provisions.	
Telephone-Telegraph:			
Commercial Telegraphers			
Electrical Workers (including Telephone Operators)	Special dues for separate locals.		
Railroad Telegraphers		" " "	
Transportation:			
St. Railway Employees	Org. ticket agents, special dues and initiation fees.		

TABLE II (continued)

Industry and Trade	*Constitutional References to Women Members with Regard to*		
	Special Dues	*Initiation Fees*	*Sick and Death Benefits*
Trade:			
Retail Clerks		No special provisions.	
Professional Service:			
Actors		" " "	
Musicians		" " "	
Teachers			
Domestic and Personal Service:			
Hotel Employees		Special dues and benefits.	
Laundry Workers		No special provisions.	
Clerical:			
P. O. Clerks		No special provisions.	
Railway Clerks		" " "	
Federal Employees		" " "	
Miscellaneous:			
Broom and Brush Workers		" " "	
Broom and Whisk Makers	Auxiliary members pay tax of 40c. mo.; journeymen workers pay tax 65c. mo.		

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